Doctrinal Controversy and Lay Religiosity in Late Reformation Germany

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Doctrinal Controversy and Lay Religiosity in Late Reformation Germany

The Case of Mansfeld

By
Robert J. Christman

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For Victoria

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ABBREVIATIONS

WA	*D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Abteilung Werke*, vols. 1– (Weimar, 1883–).
WABr	*D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Briefwechsel*, vols. 1–18 (Weimar, 1930–85).

INTRODUCTION

DOCTRINAL CONTROVERSY AS A WINDOW ONTO LAY RELIGIOSITY

On New Year's Eve, 1574, five hundred cavalry and foot soldiers, drums thumping and trumpets blaring, descended on the small central German city of Tal Mansfeld,[1] the second most important city in the territory of Mansfeld. There in Martin Luther's childhood hometown, they began shooting their weapons and destroying the houses and belongings of the so-called "heretics," most of whom had already fled the city. Cyriakus Spangenberg, the city and court preacher, leader of the "heretical" faction, barely had time to slip out of town disguised as a midwife. The next day, New Year's Day, contrary to tradition, no church services were held. Rather the citizens were required to gather in the central square and surrender their weapons. On Sunday, January 2, when a newly arrived "orthodox" pastor preached in the city church, two citizens stood and sang loudly Luther's Reformation anthem, "Lord Keep Us Steadfast in Thy Word,"[2] an act of defiance for which they were immediately imprisoned. On January 3, in the presence of "orthodox" churchmen, each adult citizen of Tal Mansfeld was

[1] Already in the sixteenth century the city of Tal Mansfeld was often referred to merely as "Mansfeld," a designation that became increasingly common in subsequent centuries. For clarity's sake, I have retained the term "Tal Mansfeld" whenever I refer to the city of Mansfeld. The term "Mansfeld" will refer to the territory in its entirety.

[2] *Erhalt uns Herr, bei deinem Wort*, Martin Luther, 1541. For the text of this hymn see Markus Jenny, *Luther's Geistliche Lieder und Kirchengesänge* (Köln and Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1985), 304–305. Singing this hymn was confrontational on two levels. First, it associated the plight of Spangenberg and his followers with that of Martin Luther. Second, Spangenberg had recently reworked the hymn into a twenty-four stanza explanation of his theological position, and an indictment of those individuals who disagreed with him. It is unclear which version the two men sang, but in either case, the act was provocative. For the text of Spangenberg's hymn, *Ein schön geistlich Lied, Erhalt uns Herr bey deinem Wort, etc. Mit mehrer Erklerung desselben, Wer der Bapst und Türk sey, damit man dieselben nicht allein zu Rom und Contantinopel suche, Sondern erkenne lerne, das der Grewl der verwüstung allbereit in der heiligen stet steh, Danielis am 9. Matth. 24. Capitel*, (n.p., 1574), see Philipp Wackernagel, ed., *Das deutsche Kirchenlied von der ältesten Zeit bis zu Anfang des XVII. Jahrhunderts*, 5 vols. (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1864–1877), here at v. 4, n. 249. For more on Spangenberg's hymn, see chapter three, "The Pastors and their Parishioners," [117 ff.].

interrogated as to his or her beliefs regarding original sin, the point of doctrine for which they were suspected of heresy. A contemporary describes the scene:

> When the poor people there assembled understood the gravity of the situation, that all followers of Spangenberg were being threatened with execution, and that the [invaders] had a sack full of ropes and many soldiers and such folk present to carry out these threats, they began to tremble. In the end, of the entire citizenry only thirteen council members and twenty-six or twenty-eight citizens along with them declared themselves faithful to their pastors' teachings, which are entirely in line with the Augsburg Confession.[3]

Those laymen who sided with Spangenberg and his colleagues were immediately seized. On January 4, most of the soldiers departed leaving behind a small occupying force, but they took with them thirty-five prisoners including the entire city council and eighteen burghers marching two by two. After a month-long incarceration, the majority of the prisoners were released but a minority refused to recant their beliefs and were expelled from the territory.

What began as an ivory tower debate over Lutheran doctrine had moved onto the street. In the weeks and months surrounding the New Year's Eve invasion, one third of the approximately one hundred clerics in the territory of Mansfeld were banished. But among the laity, a sizable group of "heretics" was just beginning its ordeal. During the following decade, they established an underground oppositional church, rumors of which persisted for the next thirty-five years. This shadow church, of which I have been able to identify 154 members by name, was kept alive primarily by lay efforts, with occasional encouragement from expelled pastors. Rather than return to the territory's official state church, members of this group chose to suffer harassments that included repeated citations before the consistory, refusal of the comforts of the church including burial (many were forced to bury their deceased loved ones in their own gardens), forced business closings, imprisonments, beatings, and expulsions from the territory.

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[3] "Als nun die Armen Leutte, so vil dere vorhanden gewesen, den ernst, weil die Spangenbergisch allen zuhencken gedreuett, derenthalben auch ein gantzer radsack voller stricke, sampt vilen stadtknechten und dergleichen volck mittbracht worden gesehen, seindt sie in Zagen gefallen. Also aus der vorhanden Burgerschafft, allein Dreizehen Radts personen und in die sechs oder acht undt zwanzigk buerger neben Ihnen, bey Ihres Pfarhers Lhere, so durchaus der Augspurgische Confession gemess bestendig zubleiben sich erklerett." Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 60v.

Even the miners, a sizable proportion of the population, are said to have greeted one another in the streets and taverns with the question, "Are you an *accidenter* or a *substantioser*?," referring to the two sides in the debate. Shouting matches and fistfights ensued when the "wrong" answer was given.[4] Through an analysis of this event and its fallout, this study opens a new window onto the character and intensity of laymen's and—women's religious beliefs and convictions fifty years after Luther's ideas first penetrated the territory.

The precise doctrinal point in question was the rather esoteric issue of how Lutherans should define the concept of original sin, a debate that began at the University of Jena in 1560. Employing Aristotelian terminology, the theologian Matthias Flacius Illyricus argued that prior to baptism, original sin was so destructive and had so transformed the noblest aspects of human nature, that it was rightly referred to as the substance (*substantia*) of human nature. His opponent, Viktorin Strigel, responded that original sin should rather be considered an accident (*accidens*), something non-essential to human nature that blunted, bridled, and controlled, but did not destroy it. The disputed point, fraught with implications for central Lutheran doctrines regarding the role of the human will in salvation, began as part of a wider debate between the Gnesio-Lutherans, those whose theology emphasized the total depravity of man, and the Philippists, who "tended toward views of theological anthropology which demonstrated certain affinities with the optimism shared by Renaissance humanists and Bielists alike."[5] But it soon turned the Gnesio-Lutherans against one another.

In the territory of Mansfeld, the controversy also assumed a political dimension as it spread from the churchmen to the counts. In 1572, two years prior to the invasion of Tal Mansfeld, theologians from Jena formally requested Mansfeld's clergy to provide an opinion on the controversial doctrine. Rather than reaching consensus, the issue quickly divided the territory's predominantly Gnesio-Lutheran clerics, and each side presented its position to its parishioners in scores of pamphlets and sermons. As the tone of the debate became increasingly

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[4] Michael Emmerling, *Emmerlingii Propylaeum historiae sacrae de Statu Ecclesiae Mansfeld* (Wittenberg, 1710 [1646]), 90.

[5] Robert Kolb, "Dynamics of Party Conflict in the Saxon Late Reformation: Gnesio-Lutherans vs. Philippists," *Journal of Modern History* 49 (1977), 1289–1305, here at 1294. This article provides and excellent summary of the variety of issues beyond theological anthropology that separated these two groups.

acerbic, the nine ruling counts also split over the issue. One count even erected a printing press in his castle in order to keep the flood of pamphlets coming after the territory's printers had been forbidden by the elector of Saxony, one of Mansfeld's feudal lords, from printing anymore polemical works. Along with the other feudal lord, the administrator of the archdiocese of Magdeburg, the elector took advantage of the situation to assert control over the territory, while the administrator sent the invading force that resulted in the events of New Years Eve, 1574.

Because it so shattered the *status quo*, this controversy offers the ideal opportunity to examine the role religion played among the laity in the late Reformation, not only in the pious practices of the daily routine, but as a central and informing factor of life. It is to this facet of religion that the term "religiosity" will refer in this study, that is, to a coherent set of beliefs that is not only comprehended intellectually, but also becomes a significant factor in informing decisions, actions, and the behavior of an individual. While day-to-day piety offers some insight into such religiosity, it is only in the crucible of conflict and under the reality of persecution that the breadth and depth of convictions can be plumbed. Moreover, because this particular conflict was an internal Lutheran debate, it allows for a more precise level of insight, not into whether the laity understood essential differences between Lutherans and Catholics (or any other Protestant groups), but of the degree to which Luther's doctrinal ideas had taken root in the minds of the German Protestant laity. In short, this conflict offers a more complete understanding of Lutheran lay religiosity than has been available heretofore.

This book argues that, by the second half of the sixteenth century, a significant proportion of the laity, even those of more modest social and economic status, had developed a far-reaching understanding of the central doctrines of Lutheranism and a personal connection to them. At first glance this claim may seem self evident, but it comes in response to the recent trend in historical scholarship to downplay the notion that lay actions had any basis in doctrinal belief, itself a clear response to an earlier historiography of Lutheran triumphalism. In fact, it was not until the 1960s that the opinion prevailing since the time of the Reformation—that the content of Luther's theology quickly led to mass individual conversions among late medieval Germans—was called into doubt. Bernd Moeller's influential essay, "Imperial Cities and the Reformation," first raised questions about why the overwhelming

majority of imperial cities sided with the Reformation, and asked what forces might explain this.[6] Since then, a troupe of social historians have questioned the notion that belief was central to the groundswell of support for Luther's Reformation, and they have placed in its stead a variety of other social,[7] political,[8] economic,[9] and even psychological[10] forces to explain the Reformation's success.

As a result, an earlier certainty that Luther's popularity rested on the quality of his doctrine has given way to a deep skepticism as to whether the laity had any meaningful understanding of the Reformer's theology at all. Today many historians believe that, taken as a whole, the common folk in the German speaking lands demonstrated little interest in dogmatic theology or, indeed, abstract beliefs in general. Purely spiritual encouragement and abstractions, they argue, found little attraction, especially the Lutheran emphasis on trust in God rather than more immediate solutions to earthly problems.[11] And this was particularly so in the rural areas, so the argument goes, where the commoners had even less interest in doctrine, especially that of any confessional stripe.[12] David Mayes has posited that until the Peace

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[6] Bernd Moeller, *Reichsstadt und Reformation* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1962).

[7] For example, see Lyndal Roper, *The Holy Household: Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1989).

[8] Here I am thinking particularly of the work done on the magisterial Reformation.

[9] For example, see Thomas A. Brady, Jr., *Ruling Class, Regime, and Reformation at Strasbourg, 1520–1555* (Leiden: Brill, 1978).

[10] For example, see Steven Ozment, *The Reformation in the Cities: the Appeal of Protestantism to Sixteenth-Century Germany and Switzerland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975).

[11] Bernard Vogler claims that "theologische Erörterungen fanden wenig Resonanz" among the laity. "Volksfrömmigkeit im Lutherthum Deutschsprachiger Länder," in Hansgeorg Molitor and Heribert Smolinsky, eds., *Volksfrömmigkeit in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1994), 37–48, here 38; Richard van Dülmen states that "Religiös-dogmatisches Wissen spielt keine Rolle" in the religion of the people, and "daß im einfachen Volk eine recht starke Resistenz gegenüber einer allzu abstrakten Glaubenslehre…blieb." "Volksfrömmigkeit und konfesionelles Christentum im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert," in Wolfgang Schneider, ed., *Volkreligiosität in der modernen Sozialgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 14–30, here 19 and 35.

[12] C. Scott Dixon argues that during the early Reformation in Franconia, village requests for the Gospel to be preached were based on political rather than theological considerations: "The desire to hear the Word was widespread, but not for theological reasons. The parishioners considered the clear preaching of the Word their right as subjects of the margrave." Moreover, "…there is little evidence to suggest that the evangelical message was integrated or understood by the parishioners to a degree which would warrant the notion of mass conversion." *The Reformation in Rural*

of Westphalia (1648), rural laity in Upper Hesse were able to resist confessional theology altogether, substituting for it a more basic form of Christianity "based on aconfessional norms, values, and customs" indigenous to peasant culture and "…not doctrinally-oriented, nor founded because of some differing theological position, nor inclined to develop any creedal statements."[13] The end result was that during this period, "…scarcely any trace of confessionalization was left on the region."[14] And even in urban quarters such as the cosmopolitan city of Strasbourg, with its tradition as a hotbed of Protestantism and its impressive list of resident Reformers, questions have been raised about the laity's interest in and understanding of theology.[15]

But other scholarly voices have painted a different picture of lay interest in doctrine. In his examination of the phenomenon of martyrdom in early modern Europe, Brad Gregory has argued that if we are to understand the c. 5,000 Catholics, Protestants, and Anabaptists who died for their faith in early modern Europe (not to mention the huge cast of supporters who encouraged them in their trials), we must take seriously their articulations of belief in specific doctrines.[16] Moreover Christopher Brown has demonstrated that in the city of Joachimsthal, Lutheranism was inculcated in the laity to such an extent that even when the town's pastors were expelled and the people were persecuted under Hapsburg re-Catholicization, "Lutheran piety and identity survived for a generation…."[17] Such a view suggests at least some comprehension of essential Lutheran theology.

Society: The Parishes of Brandenburg-Ansbach-Kulmbach, 1528–1603 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 39 and 46; Thomas Robisheaux argues that in rural Hohenlohe, although the peasants accepted some of the Protestant marriage reforms because they provided mechanisms to better control the youth, peasants in general were not particularly interested in the content of the new doctrine. "Peasants and pastors: rural youth control and the Reformation in Hohenlohe, 1540–1680," *Social History* 6 (1981): 281–300, here 28.

[13] David Mayes, *Communal Christianity: The Life and Loss of a Peasant Vision in Early Modern Germany* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 6.

[14] Mayes, *Communal Christianity*, 11.

[15] Lorna Jane Abray concludes that although the city elites of Strasbourg had some understanding of Lutheran theology, even theirs "was not the increasingly convoluted doctrinal edifice that Lutheran clergy in and out of Strasbourg constructed in the sixteenth century." "The Laity's Religion: Lutheranism in Sixteenth Century Strasbourg," in R. Po-Chia, ed., *The German People and the Reformation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 216–232, here at 228.

[16] Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

[17] Christopher Brown, *Singing the Gospel: Lutheran Hymns and the Success of the Reformation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 172.

This study examines closely the issue of lay understandings of complex doctrines, and while much of the evidence comes from the urban areas in the territory of Mansfeld, to the degree made possible by the sources, the rural areas are also considered. Most importantly, it takes seriously the peoples' articulations of their own beliefs as motivating factors, while recognizing the realities of other non-ideological forces at work. As such, it brings together the insights of social historians of the last four decades with a new understanding of the role doctrine played in the lives of early modern German Lutherans. For while it is true that taken at face value, such outbursts as "Are you an *accidenter* or a *substantioser*?" might be considered mere sloganeering, in the territory of Mansfeld, the most committed of the laity kept the views of the "substance party" alive for decades after the events of New Year's Eve, 1574, and in the face of trying persecution. Some left the territory to receive the Eucharist, get married, and have children baptized by pastors who had been expelled; others set up secret house churches in which either laymen read sermons from Luther's postils or one of the pastors who had been dismissed crept surreptitiously back into the territory to preach. Still others established secret girls' and boys' schools through which to perpetuate their beliefs. Some of those counts who had sided with the "substance party" attempted to shelter this shadow church, and at least one lost his patrimonial lands as a consequence of such efforts. What is exceptional in this story of lay religiosity, however, is the variety of individuals, from the counts to weavers and miners, both men and women, who left behind primary source evidence. In letters, consistory records, visitation records, personal confessions, and even doctrinal treatises, they describe what they believed and why they believed it, articulations that illustrate a far-reaching understanding of the debated point and its implications for other essential Lutheran doctrines, such as "justification by faith alone" and "the bondage of the will." It is clear that by the late sixteenth century, even many of the unschooled laity understood basic Lutheran theology and had a deep allegiance to it.

This book makes two corollary arguments, both of which address historiographical questions regarding lay comprehension of doctrine and its impact. First, it argues that despite the clear evidence for lay understanding of the controversy's content, religious belief cannot be isolated, but must be considered as part of a complex web of religious, social, political, and economic issues. A close reading of the events in Mansfeld demonstrates that the decisions made by the laity to identify themselves with one side or the other were influenced not only by

questions of belief, but also by the following issues. First, each group of clerics in the debate attempted to identify its views with those of Martin Luther, thereby claiming Lutheran orthodoxy, an argument that held some appeal among a laity with personal ties to the Reformer that included two of his nephews. Second, one group of clerics in the debate assumed a vision of the church that included an active role for the laity even in determining the validity of doctrines; the other side saw the parishioners as primarily passive recipients of the deeper wisdom of the clerics. These conflicting views impacted lay attitudes toward each side during the controversy. Third, approval of their own pastor for personal, rather than doctrinal reasons factored into the decisions made by parishioners regarding which side to take in the debate. Fourth, familial ties and networks of friends mattered deeply, as extended families often united in siding with one group or the other. Finally, the political situation played a key role in lay actions. Parts of the territory went bankrupt in the early 1570s, and Mansfeld was in the process of being swallowed up by Electoral Saxony and the archdiocese of Magdeburg. Some of the counts used the doctrinal controversy as part of an attempt to assert their own political autonomy, and the laity demonstrate a clear understanding of the power dynamics at play, along with the potential impact of these changes on their own lives. Thus belief- and conscience-driven motivations among the laity must be seen against the backdrop of a variety of interconnected and related factors.

A second corollary argument that the book makes concerns how historians study lay religiosity. In the past, this has often been done via consistory records and ecclesiastical visitation records, sources that generally portray lay morals and beliefs under circumstances of the *status quo* and from the perspective of the cultural elites.[18] But their descriptive, legal, elite character limits their usefulness in plumbing the depths of lay religiosity, providing only a partial picture. It is only when such sources are used in conjunction with a more comprehen-

[18] Two examples of this approach include Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), which uses visitation records to argue that the Lutheran Reformation was a failure, and Peter Lang, "'Ein Grobes, Unbändiges Volk.' Visitationsberichte und Volksfrömmigkeit," in Hansgeorg Molitor und Heribert Smolinsky, eds., *Volksfrömmigkeit in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1994), 49–63, which argues from the evidence of visitation records that with regard to beliefs and behavior, most people remained unchanged by the Reformation.

sive study of a territory or region that a more complete understanding of the laity's religious convictions, as well as some insight into the motivations behind those beliefs, begins to emerge. Although it is a painstaking process, historians cannot cut corners by merely studying normative and legal sources.

And while the issue of confessionalization is not the subject of this monograph, the perceptive reader will recognize that the situation in Mansfeld speaks to the ongoing debate over that historical paradigm.[19] Confessionalization may be briefly defined as the process by which various states and territories incorporated confession-building and state formation in the second half of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, a process that normally "enabled states and societies to integrate more tightly"[20] and which aided significantly in the modernization process. Thus, "instead of focusing on the differences in doctrine and ritual, the concept of confessionalization focuses on the comparative aspects between confessional churches: the aim of confessional homogenization…; the connection between confession-building and state formation; the confessional churches' contribution to the process of social disciplining; the development of cultural and political—often national—identities in which the confessional factor played a key role."[21] Heinz Schilling, one of the pioneers of this paradigm, argues for similar stages of development across the confessions. In the case of the events in Mansfeld, most fall into the phase of Lutheranism that lasted from the death of the Reformer until the publication of the *Formula of Concord* (1577) and the *Book of Concord* (1580), a phase characterized by a consolidation of beliefs and an effort to define orthodoxy.

In many ways the events in Mansfeld fit neatly into the general paradigm of confessionalization. The controversy takes place during this period of doctrinal consolidation, and ultimately Mansfeld's more powerful neighbors, Electoral Saxony and the archdiocese of Magdeburg, along with their allies in Mansfeld among the ruling

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[19] For a helpful description of the development of the confessionalization paradigm, its definition, and the points upon which it has been critiqued, see Ute Lotz-Heumann, "Confessionalization," in *Reformation and Early Modern Europe: A Guide to Research* (Kirksville, Missouri: Truman State University Press, 2008), 136–157.

[20] Heinz Schilling, "Confessionalization and the Empire," in Heinz Schilling, ed., *Religion, Political Culture and the Emergence of Early Modern Society: Essays in German and Dutch History* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 208.

[21] Lotz-Heuman, "Confessionalization," 138–139.

counts and the powerful churchmen, crushed the minority opinion and established Lutheran orthodoxy. But in other ways the evidence from Mansfeld strengthens critiques of the paradigm already made by others, in particular the notion that confessionalization was a top-down process decisively influenced by the early modern state.[22] In Mansfeld, a variety of individuals from the nobility through the local officials, clergymen, burghers, and the general populace fiercely opposed these efforts. What is more, in Mansfeld their opposition was not to the state's efforts at social disciplining, a common point of contention, it was a rejection of the state-supported church's definition of orthodoxy. Clearly the top-down imposition of new standards of doctrinal belief and behavior was not without significant resistance, even in Mansfeld, the heartland of Lutheranism.

Finally, this study offers further evidence on a variety of topics and historiographical debates such the precise nature of the discord between the Gnesio-Lutherans and the Philippists, Lutheran understandings of ecclesiology in the late sixteenth century, the relationship between pastors and parishioners in this period, the nature and role of familial ties in early modern Germany, and Electoral Saxony's rise to prominence in the early baroque period.

The monograph is arranged as follows: chapter one, "A Portrait of Mansfeld in the Sixteenth Century," introduces the territory as the backdrop against which the events of the doctrinal controversy took place, sketching first Mansfeld's geographical layout, rural/urban dynamics, and social makeup, before moving on to an overview of its internal political divisions and their traditional alliances with larger neighboring territories over the course of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. A second section focuses on religion in the territory, tracing its development from the early sixteenth century through the Reformation and the establishment of a Protestant church structure with a deeply conservative Lutheran theological affiliation. Finally, an analysis of the actions and alliances undertaken by the different ruling factions in the politico/religious upheavals of the mid-century Schmalkald War and its aftermath illustrate how religious and political considerations combined to intensify traditional divisions in the ter-

[22] For more on this specific critique of the confessionalization paradigm see, Lotz-Heuman, "Confessionalization," 145–146.

ritory, a pattern that would remain in place (with notable exceptions) throughout the controversy over original sin.

Chapter two, "Competing Views of Original Sin and Associated Arguments and Meanings," analyzes the doctrinal issue central to the controversy, not by weighing it against other contemporary and past definitions of original sin, but by understanding the context from which it sprung and the various meanings it acquired. The assumption is that in order to evaluate the appeal of an idea among the masses, all of its connotations and associated meanings must be understood, not just its central intellectual content. This chapter answers the question why Flacius proposed the contentious definition of original sin in 1560 and what meanings, beyond its purely intellectual substance, he applied to it. The split within the Mansfeld clergy over Flacius' controversial definition can be precisely dated to 1570, when the pastorate was officially asked to condemn Flacius, and chapter two further explores what meanings the definition came to include within the context of the territory. The chapter concludes that although some aspects of Flacius' definition and its broader implications transferred easily to the new environment, in Mansfeld other ideas also became bound up with it.

Chapter three, "The Pastors and their Parishioners," explores the very different goals and methods employed by pastors on each side of the debate in Mansfeld to articulate their position on original sin to their parishioners, along with the specific arguments they employed for popular consumption. The assumption here is that the power of an idea among the masses is contingent in large part on how it is presented. The result is not only that the reader develops a better understanding of how the ideas in question were conveyed to the laity, but of two sets of diametrically opposed clerical attitudes toward the commoners, their mental aptitudes, and the question as to whether the laity's role in the life of the church should be active or passive. Ironically those clerics who argued that the human will had been completely devastated as a result of original sin also insisted that the laity had the ability and responsibility to judge in matters of doctrine. Churchmen who believed that the destruction caused by original sin did not entirely obliterate the human will, maintained that such controversies should be kept from the laity, who had neither the capacity nor the necessity to understand them.

The most powerful laity in the territory, nine ruling counts and countesses representing three dynastic lines of the same family, are

the subject of chapter four, "The Counts and the Controversy." Before turning to their actions during the conflict, however, the chapter outlines Electoral Saxony's strategy for extending its power in Mansfeld, which included economic means as well as direct intervention in religious affairs. Thus, section one introduces the political dimension of the controversy as part of a life-and-death struggle for political survival among the counts. The second section of this chapter turns to those branches of the ruling family who supported Spangenberg (the Flacian or "heretical" side), addressing the question why, in their own opinions, they took that side in the debate. Answers include: because of their self-understanding as Christian princes and simple lay Christians; due to a family history of close associations with Luther and the early Reformation (which they connected to Spangenberg's views); because of their ties of friendship to certain clerics; and on account of their deep interest in issues of doctrine and their conviction that Spangenberg's position was correct. The third section of the chapter analyzes the actions of that dynastic line that opposed Spangenberg and his colleagues, outlining their political reasons for doing so, but also demonstrating their view that Christian princes and laity in general had no business becoming involved in doctrinal affairs. This section further recounts this dynastic line's late association with the Reformation as well as its tradition of support for Albertine Saxony and personal animosities toward specific clerical members of the opposing faction as factors behind their actions. Finally, it looks at the role doctrine played, concluding that although it was not as extensive as in the case of their cousins' from the other side of the debate, it was not insignificant.

Chapter five, "The 'Heretics' of Mansfeld," introduces the remaining lay adherents of the Spangenberg faction, whose doctrine was deemed heretical, and who, therefore, have left behind the most extensive sources. Their varied social status is carefully documented, making it clear that their membership drew from across the spectrum and included miners, judges, and everyone in between. The chapter also recounts their continued and far-reaching efforts to create a shadow church, despite the many forms of persecution employed against them.

Chapter six, "Extra-doctrinal Forces Affecting the Laity," explores those religious, political, social, and intellectual factors other than a direct interest in original sin that influenced the laity during the controversy. Because the debate quickly became politicized, chapter six

addresses lay efforts to demonstrate their theological views on a political stage by refusing to swear the annual oath of loyalty to those lords who opposed their doctrinal position. Not only did they use political means to articulate their religious views, but this chapter explores how political loyalties played a significant role in shaping their views on doctrine. Social ties also bound this group, and this chapter demonstrates how familial bonds and traditional friendships served as centripetal forces, leading groups *en masse* to one side or the other in the debate. In addition, social connections between parishioners and their own pastors are scrutinized, indicating that positive feelings toward one's own cleric went a long way in pushing parishioners into one camp or the other. Issues of identity, in particular the role played by the idea of the Reformation and the notion among the laity that they were heirs to that movement, are also discussed in this chapter. An assessment is made of the degree to which the laity connected one side or the other to Luther and his teachings, and whether these connections mattered, concluding that while some laity were strongly influenced by this factor, others were impervious to it. And finally, this chapter examines lay reaction to the different clerical views regarding the role of parishioners in the life of the church (see chapter 3), demonstrating that for some, close intellectual involvement in the church held a strong appeal, while for others, such issues left them cold.

Chapter seven, "Lay Understandings of Original Sin and Lutheran Theology," finally examines the laity's beliefs by answering the questions: what did they think about original sin; did they understand how their position impacted broader Lutheran theology, that is, were they able to contextualize their beliefs; were there variations in their beliefs, and were these differences connected to their social standing, educational background, or sex; what aspect of the clerics' message attracted them most strongly; did they alter, enhance, or disregard aspects of what they heard from the clergy and if so, how; and according to their own declarations, what role did belief play in their refusal to obey the authorities and their willingness to suffer persecution. Answers to these questions reveal that a half century after Luther's theology had been introduced into this area, lay understanding of complex doctrines, even among some of the humblest folk, was far more profound than most historians have realized. Furthermore, although belief was only one factor among the many that motivated them, it nonetheless played a significant role, even when it ran contrary to their interests in terms of political power, economic wellbeing, or social connections.

A brief conclusion returns to the broader historiographical argument of the monograph, namely that the desire and abilities of a significant proportion of the laity to understand and appreciate abstract beliefs should not be underestimated; and that in order to investigate this question, neither normative sources such as visitation and consistory records, nor an examination of a particular territory under circumstances of the *status quo* is sufficient to produce an accurate account. Rather, lay religiosity must be analyzed within the context of a wide range of external factors, and understood as interacting with them. In this way the insights of the social historians over the past few decades are connected with issues of belief and conviction to form a complete view of lay religiosity.

CHAPTER ONE

A PORTRAIT OF MANSFELD IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

If, as this monograph argues, lay religiosity is shaped by a variety of religious factors interacting with diverse political, economic, and social forces, then before addressing the controversy over original sin and its implications, it is first necessary to sketch the broader context while, at the same time, introducing Mansfeld. To this end, the geography, socio-economic makeup, political configurations within the territory as well as Mansfeld's place in a wider political context, and the territory's church structure are broadly outlined in this chapter. Moreover, as will become apparent during an analysis of the controversy itself, the past remained the present, in particular with regard to the early Reformation. Actions taken by various groups of pastors, counts, and laity then deeply informed their identities and the events of the 1570s. For this reason the development of a distinctive Mansfeld religious character and accompanying ecclesiastical structures over the course of the sixteenth century receive considerable attention, as does the reaction of the various dynastic lines of counts to these changes in religion.

A Tale of Two Cities

The cities of Tal Mansfeld and Eisleben lie nine kilometers apart, nestled along the eastern perimeter of the Harz Mountains, which sweep across north central Germany. In the early modern period, the territory of Mansfeld, home to both cities, formed a gateway to the small mountain Grafschaften dotting the Harz range.[1] As its name suggests, the city of Tal Mansfeld with its c. 2,500 inhabitants lay in a valley.[2] By dint of hard work and an entrepreneurial spirit, many of the thirteen

[1] These included the territories of Stolberg-Wernigerode, Stolberg-Stolberg, Schwarzburg, Beichlingen, and Hohenstein.

[2] Erich Keyser, *Deutsches Städtebuch: Handbuch Städtischer Geschichte*, v. 2 (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Publisher, 1941), 604. Keyser puts the population at between 2,000 and 3,000 for the sixteenth century.

council members who ran the city's affairs had become wealthy in the mining operations that formed the backbone of the city's and territory's economy. A dean, the second most powerful churchman in the territory, presided over the city's seven clerics.

The council, clergy, and commoners of Tal Mansfeld all literally looked up to their superiors, the counts, whose fortress perched high above the valley on a hilltop. This elaborate configuration of buildings included fortifications, moats and stone walls, an armory and powder tower, a castle-church, stables, an apothecary, a library, a pub, gardens, and all manner of associated buildings. The counts, dean, and numerous advisors and craftsmen resided in the fortress of Mansfeld where, in 1545, during his penultimate visit to Mansfeld, Martin Luther stayed as he attempted to end the quarreling among the territory's rulers. For Luther, it was a chance to return to his homeland, for he was born in Eisleben and spent his childhood in Tal Mansfeld. The fortress's layout furnished the appellation for each of the three dynastic lines of counts, the territory having been divided in 1501. The "front position" (*Vorderort*) line had its residence closest to the cliff overlooking Tal Mansfeld, the "middle position" (*Mittelort*) counts resided in apartments next to them, and the area furthest from the precipice was occupied by the "back position" (*Hinterort*) dynastic line. Each line ruled particular sections of the territory, itself divided into thirteen districts (*Ämter*).[3] The Vorderort controlled three fifths of the territory and the Mittelort and Hinterort one fifth each, while all three lines administered the cities, forests, and meadows jointly.

Upon leaving the fortress to make the short journey to Eisleben, a traveler passed the huge, sacred black oak (*Sacra Quercus*), which stood until June 21, 1574, when lightning struck, burning the tree to the ground. Until that time, thieves were hanged from its branches, and under its foliage, the authorities dispatched evildoers with fire and sword.[4] Like Tal Mansfeld, Eisleben, with its c. 7,000 inhabitants in the

[3] They were Heldrungen, Artern, Arnstein, Friedeburg, Bornstedt, Eisleben, Mansfeld, Morungen, Schraplau, Allstedt, Rothenburg, Rammelburg, and Seeburg.

[4] This citation requires some explanation because the origins and location of the work from which it is taken are confusing, and it is referred to repeatedly in this study. It comes from volume IV of Cyriakus Spangenberg's *Mansfeldische Chronica* (vol. 1 Eisleben: Andreas Petri, 1572), a description of the territory, its various layers of government, its cities, towns, castles, cloisters, and unoccupied areas. This fourth volume was probably finished in the final year of the sixteenth century, but remained unprinted until the twentieth century. Spangenberg divided volume IV into three

mid-sixteenth century, lay in a valley.[5] The most ancient and important city in the territory, Eisleben was a large and powerful center for copper and silver mining, producing up to 20,000 centner[6] of smelted copper per year. Trade in other goods, especially agricultural products and beer, also thrived in the city.[7] As in Tal Mansfeld, a council ran the day-to-day affairs of Eisleben, which was home to the territory's ecclesiastical head, the superintendent, and to its principal church, St. Andreas. Ultimate authority in Eisleben did not rest with the councilmen or church leaders, however, but with the counts, who were never far away. Their three dynastic lines were further sub-divided, with the lands of the Vorderort split among six families (each with its own residence) and the Mittelort and Hinterort sections divided between one and three family members depending upon the period in question. Each line had a domicile in Eisleben and the Vorderort counts in particular often resided there.

Together, Tal Mansfeld and Eisleben formed the administrative, economic, political, and ecclesiastical heart of the territory, which included nine communities designated with the status of city,[8] surrounded by 176 villages dotting 1,100 square kilometers. With approximately 50,000 inhabitants, Mansfeld was among the larger territories

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books containing 59 chapters. Chapters 1–14 belong to book one; chapters 13–30 to book two; and chapters 31–59 to book three. However, only books one and three have survived, both edited and printed in the periodical *Mansfelder Blätter* as follows: Carl Rühlemann, ed., *Mansfelder Blätter* 27 (1913): 1–312, chapters 31–33 and 35–43; *Mansfelder Blätter* 28 (1914): 313–554, chapters 44–59; Rudolf Leers, ed., *Mansfelder Blätter* 30 (1916): 1–240, chapters 1–10 and 34; *Mansfelder Blätter* 31 (1917): 241–366, chapter 11; *Mansfelder Blätter* 32 (1918): 367–436, chapters 12–14. This reference is found in Spangenberg, *Mansfeldische Chronica*, Carl Rühlemann, ed., *Mansfelder Blätter* 27 (1913): 57. Throughout this study all citations of the *Mansfeldische Chronica* are taken from the aforementioned volumes of the *Mansfelder Blätter*.

[5] Precise population figures for this period are difficult to find. Keyser estimates that in 1433, Eisleben's population was 4,000, but by the end of the sixteenth century had reached 9,000–10,000. Keyser, *Deutsches Städtebuch*, v. 2, 473. Martin Brecht estimates the population at "more than 4,000" at the end of the fifteenth century. Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: His Road to Reformation 1483–1521*, James L. Schaaf, trans., (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985 [1981]), 1. The figure of 7,000 is, therefore, a rough estimate.

[6] 1 centner = c. 50 kilograms

[7] In 1517, four of the territory's thirteen districts (Eisleben, Tal Mansfeld, Seeburg and Bornstedt) produced 2,196 barrels of beer. Karl Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld im Reformationszeitalter* (Eisleben: Reichardt, 1855), 12.

[8] These were Eisleben, Tal Mansfeld, Hettstedt, Gerbstedt, Artern, Schraplau, Allstedt, Heldrungen, and Wippra.

of upper and lower Saxony, its citizenry made up primarily of miners and farmers.[9]

"The majority of the people are miners"

Indeed, the mining industry shaped the territory's entire character, as miners made up a substantial and potentially volatile segment of society. By 1525, c. 3,000 miners lived in the territory, a figure that does not include workers in subsidiary occupations associated with the smelting of the ore.[10] Although only 6% percent of the total population, if women (c. 25,000), as well as men and boys to old or young to work (c. 5,000) are excluded, miners made up approximately 15% of the male workforce. Their concentration rose sharply in the cities of Eisleben, Tal Mansfeld, and Hettstedt, where the mining operations were localized into three areas officially designated as mining districts.[11] In 1568, 844 workers mined 93 shafts in the Tal Mansfeld mining district alone,[12] meaning that over one third of the city's inhabitants worked in the mines. The situation was probably similar in Hettstedt, although in Eisleben, with its more diversified economy, the percentage would likely have been somewhat lower.

A miner's life was difficult. After a few years of schooling, a boy of thirteen or fourteen began his career as a miner. Up at four o'clock in the morning, the neophyte labored as a *Treckjunge*, whose job it was to drag the mined ore out of the shafts on a sled attached by a rope to his neck and shoulders. With hard work and good fortune, such a boy might rise through the ranks and become wealthy enough to start his own family by age 25.[13] Only a very few, however, became a *Hüttenmeister*, the highest position in the mining industry during

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[9] Marion Ebruy, "Die Verwaltung der Grafschaft Mansfeld durch Oberaufseher des Kurfürstentums Sachsen von der Sequestration der Grafschaft Mansfeld 1570 bis zum Aussterben des Grafengeschlechts 1780: Die Rolle und Aufgabe der Oberaufseher als Regierungsbevollmächtigte der Kurfürsten von Sachsen in der Grafschaft Mansfeld" (Diss. U. of Leipzig, 1992), 1.

[10] Ekkehard Westermann, "Der wirtschaftliche Konzentrationsprozeß im Mansfelder Revier und seine Auswirkungen auf Martin Luther, seine Verwandten und Freunde," in *Martin Luther und der Bergbau im Mansfelder Land*, Rosemarie Knape, ed. (Leipzig: Messedruck Leipzig GmbH, 2000), 63–91, here at 70.

[11] Control of these three districts, designated the Eisleben, Mansfeld, and Hettstedt mountains, was given the counts by the emperor as its own separate regalia.

[12] Hermann Etzrodt and Kurt Kronenburg, *Hirsh: Geschichte eines Mansfelder Geschlechts, 1500–1700* (Eisleben, n.p., 1938), 38.

[13] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 35.

the early sixteenth century. The danger associated with the work, the extreme physical difficulty of the occupation, the possibility of financial ruin for choosing a vein that yielded low returns, and vulnerability to the changes in the economy made the life of the miner particularly precarious. This lack of certitude seems to have translated into a degree of volatility among the miners not present in other demographic groups.

In the early 1520s Thomas Müntzer, one of the leaders of the peasants' uprising of 1525, targeted Mansfeld's miners with his message.[14] In 1523, the Hinterort counts called Müntzer to be pastor in Allstedt, a town in their portion of the territory. Although he served there for only one year, Müntzer won followers in Mansfeld, as citizens of Eisleben, Tal Mansfeld, and the surrounding area traveled to Allstedt to hear him preach.[15] He quickly established a network of adherents whose secret conventicles promoted egalitarian religious views.[16] When arrested on August 1, 1524, by representatives of Albertine Saxony for exhorting his parishioners to destroy a shrine in a nearby village, he testified that many citizens from the surrounding territories had come to him and those whose princes had not yet declared for the Reformation had inquired whether they should form an association against their lords. Among this group, he claimed, was a large contingent of miners from Mansfeld.[17] When the Peasants' War broke out, Müntzer immediately wrote to his former congregation at Allstedt, rousing them to action and inciting them to "stir up the villages and cities and especially the miners and other good lads, appropriate for the job. We must not sleep any longer."[18]

In fact, farmers and miners, many from within the territory, destroyed half of Mansfeld's twelve cloisters and convents, but in the end, the counts and pastors were able to regain control of the situation. The pastors preached against the uprising and the Hinterort count, Albrecht, moved against a band of c. 70 peasants, killing them and

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[14] See Siegfried Bräuer, "Bauernkrieg in der Grafschaft Mansfeld—Fiktion und Fakten," in *Martin Luther und der Bergbau im Mansfelder Land*, Rosemarie Knape, ed. (Leipzig: Leipzig Messedruck GmbH, 2000), 121–158.

[15] Spangenberg, *Mansfeldische Chronica*, in *Mansfelder Blätter* 28 (1914): 483.

[16] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 125.

[17] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 127.

[18] "Reget an in dorfern und stedten und sonderlich die bergkgesellen mit ander guther bursse, welche guth darzu wird sein. Wir mussen nit lenger slaffen." Thomas Müntzer, *Schriften und Briefe*, Günther Franz, ed., *Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte*, v. 33 (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1968), 454–456, here at 454.

burning their homes.[19] Furthermore, Luther himself was in Seeburg, a Hinterort town, when news of the peasants' rising in Thuringia reached Mansfeld. He immediately began preaching against the revolt, before taking his message to Eisleben, then on to the surrounding territories.[20] These actions proved successful and Müntzer was unable to swing great numbers of miners to his cause. Nonetheless, their penchant for volatility remained a real concern. Twenty three years later in 1548, when Emperor Charles V attempted to re-Catholicize Mansfeld, the counts raised the possibility that this action would cause the miners to revolt. "For most merciful emperor and lord," wrote the counts,

> it is the case in our territory that the majority of the people are miners, who have little to lose and are easily moved to action. They will not appreciate being coerced. The welfare of the whole territory rests on them and we know that if we push too hard, the pastors will leave and the preaching and the [distribution of] the sacrament will stop. And we, after the loss of our pastors, will no longer be secure in our lives and our bodies at the hands of the miners. Furthermore it would initiate an uproar among the entire folk.[21]

Although the counts' explanation failed to move the emperor, their characterization must have held some truth. The miners' potential to act as a group, their low economic and social status, and their susceptibility to financial ruin made them receptive to incendiary messages that could potentially tear the territory apart. During the controversy over original sin, this possibility was never far from the minds of the counts and their feudal lords.

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[19] Both the Hinterort count, Albrecht, and the Vorderort count, Ernst, took part in the military response to the peasants' revolt. Furthermore, Müntzer targeted both men with threatening letters for their failure to support his cause. Müntzer, *Schriften und Briefe*, 467–468 (Ernst), and 469–470 (Albrecht).

[20] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 151.

[21] "Dann allergnedigster Keiser und her, Ist es mit unser herschaft also gelegen, das das mehrer theil des Volcks Berckleuthe, welliche nicht viel zu verliehren, auch leichtlichen zu bewegen, darvon zu lauften mit grossem zwangk auch nicht getruckt sein wollen, doch gleichwol die wolfart der gantzen Herschaft, an Ihnen gelegen, und wir so viel wissen, do wir gleich, darauf dringen, das die Prediger alle abziehen und daraus verwüstunge der Predigt und Sacrament volget, wir auch nocht verliehrung der prediger unsers leibs und lebens vor dem Berckvolk nicht sicher und aufruhr des gantzen volcks gewerttigk sein würden." Counts Gebhart, Hans Georg, Hans Albrecht, and Hans Ernst, "Derer Herren Graffen von Mansfeld Antwort an Kayser Carln wegen Annehmung des Interims. A. 1548 (und die Kayerl. Antwort)," *Fortgesetzte Sammlung von alten und neuen Theologischen Sachen, zur geheiligten Ubung ertheilet von einigen Dienern des Göttlichen Wortes*, v. 5 (Leipzig: Jacob Andreas Bock, 1721), 719–725, here at 721–722.

Life between the Hapsburgs and the Wettins

Nor were the counts unmindful of Mansfeld's position over against its more powerful neighbors and the emperor, likewise significant factors in the controversy. For as a result of its mines, Mansfeld generated considerable wealth, raising the envy of its feudal lords, who would use the doctrinal upheaval in the territory to promote their own interests there. Throughout the middle ages and early modern period, the counts struggled to maintain their imperial status as rulers upon whom the emperor bestowed regalia, and to avoid becoming *Landsassen*, nobility who received their regalia from regional princes, in this case the leaders of Albertine Saxony, the archdiocese of Magdeburg, and the diocese of Halberstadt.[22] Because these efforts became so intimately bound up with the conflict over original sin, and because the laity was draw into this struggle, a brief overview of Mansfeld's feudal obligations is necessary background.

Until the end of the sixteenth century, Mansfeld's counts were considered imperial counts, responsible for mustering thirty horsemen and 135 foot soldiers when called upon by the emperor to do so.[23] Throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, they fought to retain and increase those regalia they received from the emperor in order to preserve their position as imperial counts, while fending off the advances of their more powerful neighbors who endeavored to bring the counts under their own direct control. As a result of this struggle, the privileges received by the counts from the emperor and the districts and jurisdictions bestowed on them as imperial regalia waxed and waned.

Saxony represented the greatest threat to the counts' imperial status. When the Wettins, the princes (*Markgrafen*) of Meissen, were also designated electors and dukes of Saxony in 1423, their position in central Germany strengthened considerably and they immediately began a policy of expansion. Already in 1442, they procured the rights over the regalia of the domain of Arnstein, traditionally part of Mansfeld, at the emperor's expense. In 1466, the emperor surrendered to them seigniority over the Tal Mansfeld mines and the domain of

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[22] Günther Wartenberg, "Mansfeld," in *Die Territorien des Reichs im Zeitalter der Reformation und Konfessionalisierung. Land und Konfession 1500–1650*, Anton Schindling and Walther Ziegler, eds. (Münster: Aschendorff, 1998), 78–91, here at 80–81.

[23] Ebruy, "Die Verwaltung der Grafschaft," 1.

Morungen—an unwelcome change the counts of Mansfeld were forced to accept in 1484.[24] As a result of the Wettins' successes, by the end of the fifteenth century almost none of the land held by the counts of Mansfeld was regalia they received from the emperor, which had been reduced almost entirely to privileges of use and court jurisdictions. When the emperor confirmed the Wettins' claims in 1485, the fact that he remained the counts' highest lord "was not much more than a formality."[25] This fact did not deter the counts from insisting on their rights as imperial counts and, indeed, the Vorderort count, Hoyer, was successful in procuring new privileges from the emperor during the first half of the sixteenth century. But the counts never regained their former status.

In the Treaty of Leipzig of 1485,[26] Albertine Saxony received the rights to Mansfeld's regalia bestowed by Saxony. From 1495 on, the dukes of Saxony invited the Mansfelders to the Saxon-Albertine provincial diets. In 1518, Duke George successfully blocked the counts' acquisition of the domain of Beichlingen, which would have added imperial fiefs to the Mansfelders' holdings. Nonetheless, the duke was unable to accomplish his goal of striking the Mansfelders from the imperial register altogether.[27] Throughout the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the counts repeatedly appeared as councilors, emissaries, and administrators for the Albertine Saxons, duties that advanced the process of mediatization that was taking place. But the counts of Mansfeld retained their rights regarding money, taxes, police orders, and most importantly for this study, the church.[28]

After the Saxons, the archbishops of Magdeburg controlled much of the counts' regalia, but unlike the Wettins, they made little effort to expand their holdings in Mansfeld. From 1403 until 1570, the regalia

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[24] Günther Wartenberg, "Die Mansfelder Grafen und der Bergbau," in *Martin Luther und der Bergbau im Mansfelder Land*, Rosemarie Knape, ed. (Leipzig: Leipzig Messedruck GmbH, 2000), 29–42, here at 35.

[25] "…war nicht viel mehr als eine Formel." Erich Hempel, *Die Stellung der Grafen von Mansfeld zum Reich und zum Landesfürstentum (bis zur Sequestration)* (Halle: Gebauer-Schwetschke Verlag, 1917), 21.

[26] The Treaty of Leipzig divided Saxony between the Albertines, dukes, and the Ernestines, electors. In 1547 as a result of the Schmalkald War in which the Albertine Duke Moritz of Saxony supported the emperor, Albertine Saxony was awarded the electorship. For opposing the emperor, Ernestine Saxony was demoted to a dukedom.

[27] Wartenberg, "Die Mansfelder Grafen und der Bergbau," 35.

[28] Wartenberg, "Mansfeld," 81.

bestowed by the archbishops and (after the Reformation) the Lutheran administrators of the archdiocese of Magdeburg, changed little.[29] Near the end of this period, however, family politics and expansionist tendencies began to play a greater role in the archdiocese's relationship to the territory. In 1566, Joachim III Frederick of Brandenburg became the evangelical administrator of the archdiocese. A Hohenzollern, son of the elector of Brandenburg and future elector of Brandenburg himself, his appointment meant that Hohenzollern interests could potentially collide with Wettin interests in the territory. Although this did not happen during the late-sixteenth century, the potential for conflict remained and the doctrinal controversy offered a clear venue for it.

The diocese of Halberstadt similarly appears to have had little interest in expanding its holdings in Mansfeld. From 1480 until 1566, the diocese did not even have bishops, but was under the control of administrators who were also the archbishops of Magdeburg. In other words, during this period Halberstadt was essentially an appendix of the archdiocese of Magdeburg, so it is not surprising that between 1403 and 1573, the regalia Halberstadt bestowed upon the counts of Mansfeld remained unchanged. And in 1573, Halberstadt gave its rights over Mansfeld to the Albertine Saxons in exchange for holdings outside the territory. The diocese of Halberstadt's role in the controversy over original sin is, therefore, negligible, except that the regalia they bestowed on the counts included the city of Eisleben until the exchange of 1573. Their control over Eisleben, coupled with the administrator's control over Tal Mansfeld (opposing headquarters in the debate over original sin), meant that the Albertine elector was unable to become directly involved in the controversy until after 1573.

From Rome to Wittenberg: The Early Reformation in Mansfeld

During the controversy over original sin, the early Reformation and the reaction of the various dynastic lines of counts to it played integral roles and therefore require some explanation. Prior to the Reformation, the church in Mansfeld fell under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the bishop of Halberstadt, who answered to the archbishop of Mainz.

[29] Hempel, *Die Stellung der Grafen von Mansfeld*, 43.

However, immediate ecclesiastical power in the territory was concentrated in the hands of an archdean, who administered the territory's church affairs locally. During the course of the fifteenth century, control over the archdeanate fluctuated between direct papal and local episcopal authority, but a handwritten note found in Eisleben's St. Andreas church indicates that shortly before the Reformation, control of the territory's church was firmly in the hands of the counts, who served as electors of the archdean.[30] Thus the counts held ultimate authority over the Mansfeld church already prior to the Reformation, a right they jealously guarded throughout the sixteenth century. Moreover, their control extended outward from the archdeanate to many of the territory's most important churches over which they held rights of patronage (*ius patronatus*). The exception was St. Andreas church, where the bishop of Halberstadt was patron.[31] Furthermore, the territory's twelve cloisters held patronage rights over various churches and wielded great influence over Mansfeld's religious affairs.[32]

That Mansfeld played a key role in the early Reformation was a fact not forgotten by its inhabitants for the remainder of the sixteenth century. Soon after Luther's entrance onto the public stage, Protestant ideas and teachings entered Mansfeld through the newly established Augustinian cloister, St. Anne's, located in Eisleben's recently added quarter, the New City (*Neustadt*).[33] Caspar Güttel, who would become the individual most responsible for promoting the Reformation in the territory,[34] arrived in Eisleben in 1515 at the recommendation of

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[30] "In folgenden Jahren ist den Grafen die Gnade widerfahren, das sie selbst einen Decanum zu Mansfeld ohne jemandes Einrede zu wählen und zu confirmiren Macht haben sollten. Und ist der Decanus *ab omni superioritate, jurisdictione, potestate et dominio* des Bischofs zu Halberstadt und aller seiner Nachkommen und von allen Vicarien und Officialen eximirt worden, also daß er vor dem Bischofe und seinem Officalen zu erschienen nicht schuldig. Diese Privilegia sind 1513 durch Papst Leo bestätigt worden." Cited from Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 18.

[31] During the Peasants' War, however, the archbishop of Mainz (at that time also bishop of Halberstadt) ceded *ius patronatus* over St. Andreas to Count Hoyer, the patriarch of the Vorderort line, who had remained a loyal adherent of the Roman faith. Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 19.

[32] The orders in the territory included: Benedictine Nuns, Premonstratensians, Cistercians, Josephatians (*Josaphatorden*), Benedictines, Sisters of the Augustinians, Carmelites, and Augustinian Brothers. Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 19.

[33] The Eisleben Neustadt was founded in 1514 by the Hinterort count, Albrecht IV, sometimes referred to as Albrecht VII.

[34] See G. Kawerau, "Casper Güttel, Ein Lebensbild aus Luthers Freundeskreise," in *Zeitschrift des Harzvereins für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 14 (1881): 33–132.

Johann von Staupitz (1460/69–1525), vicar-general of the observant Augustinians, and in response to the call of a Hinterort count. Güttel helped found the new cloister, served as the count's chaplain, and preached Luther's ideas in Eisleben and the surrounding area from c. 1519 until his death in 1542.

The meeting of the general convent of Augustinians at St. Anne's in 1520 proved to be an important event in the early Reformation. To avoid direct involvement in the growing storm, Staupitz resigned his position, conferring it upon Wenceslaus Linck (1482–1547), a close personal friend of Luther, who would become a key reformer in his own right.[35] At the convent's conclusion, both men traveled to Wittenberg to convince Luther that it was necessary to explain that his attacks on the pope were not meant as personal affronts.[36] The result was the Letter of Dedication to Pope Leo X that Luther attached to his famous treatise, "On Christian Liberty."[37] The years 1523 and 1524 saw an exodus from most of the territory's cloisters and convents. One of the last Augustinians at St. Anne's left the following graffiti on his wall,

> There I sat in my cell,
> Martin Luther did me well,
> For against me he did say,
> That in my cell I could not stay.[38]

The Reformation split the counts of Mansfeld along dynastic lines, both confessionally and politically. The Vorderort remained loyal to the Roman faith until the line's patriarch, Hoyer VI, died in 1540. Throughout his life, Hoyer maintained close ties to Emperor Charles V, King Ferdinand, and to Albertine Saxony, receiving many city and market privileges from the emperor for his loyalty.[39] These ties are apparent in a variety of services rendered by Hoyer for his political

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[35] See Charles E. Daniel, Jr., "Link, Wenceslaus," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, Hans Hillerbrand, ed., 4 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 2: 425.

[36] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 66.

[37] *WA* 7:42–49.

[38] Da ich saß in meiner Zelle
Martinus Luther that ein groß Gefälle
Wider mich er thät schreiben,
Daß ich nicht vermacht in meiner Zelle zu bleiben.
Eusebius Christian Francke, *Historie der Grafschaft Manßfeld* (Leipzig, 1723), 224; quoted from Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 67.

[39] Wartenberg, "Die Mansfelder Grafen und der Bergbau," 35.

superiors. In 1528, King Ferdinand sent the count on an errand to the Protestant Saxon elector to squelch rumors that the Catholic princes were organizing an alliance against him.[40] The following year, Ferdinand appointed Hoyer the task of inviting neighboring princes to the imperial diet and lobbying their support for a campaign against the Turks.[41] Duke George of Saxony (1500–1539), likewise a fierce opponent of the Reformation, employed the count to procure spouses for his three granddaughters and appointed him to the Albertine council for the duration of his life.[42] Despite Hoyer's best efforts, his nephews, heirs to the Vorderort section of the territory, quickly instituted the evangelical religion upon their uncle's death in 1540. In doing so, they followed the lead of Henry the Pious (1539–1541), the new duke of Saxony, who established the Reformation in Albertine Saxony in 1539. Such traditional political associations, as well as the belated reception of the Reformation, help to explain the Vorderort counts' actions during the controversy over original sin.

In contrast to the Vorderort line, not only did the Hinterort count, Albrecht IV (1486–1560), and his brother, the Mittelort count, Gebhard VII (1486–1558), energetically support Luther,[43] but both counts gravitated toward the Ernestine princes of Saxony in political and religious affairs. Time and again these counts inserted themselves at the very center of Protestant events. When in 1526, the Ernestine elector, John the Constant of Saxony, and Landgrave Philipp of Hesse established a defensive alliance against the emperor and princes loyal to Rome, Albrecht and Gebhard were among its first signatories.[44] In 1529, Albrecht attended the Diet of Speyer, where he reported the proceedings to the Saxon elector's son, John Frederick.[45] A year later the count accompanied Elector John the Constant to the Diet of Augsburg, where the count acted as the elector's representative.[46] In 1531, Albrecht and Gebhard attended the convention at Schmalkald, where they signed

[40] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 219.
[41] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld,* 220.
[42] Wartenberg, "Die Mansfelder Grafen und der Bergbau," 35.
[43] For more on Count Albrecht and the early Reformation in Mansfeld, see Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 97–107; and H. Größler, "Albrecht VII von Mansfeld. Ein Lebensbild aus der Reformationzeit," *Zeitschrift des Harzvereins für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 18 (1885): 365–400.
[44] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 227.
[45] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld,* 230.
[46] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 230.

the contract of alliance establishing the Schmalkald League. When evangelical princes and theologians met again in Schmalkald in 1537 to discuss the possibility of a church council, both counts, along with two of their theologians, were in attendance.[47] The following year the counts again met their fellow Protestant princes in Braunschweig, by which time the Schmalkald League's membership had risen to 23 princes, 41 counts, and 123 cities.[48]

In 1525, consultations with Luther led Albrecht and Gebhard to open an evangelical school in Eisleben. The Reformer reported to Spalatin, "I am hurrying off to Eisleben with Philipp and Master Agricola, having been called there by Count Albrecht to establish a Christian school. . . ."[49] At Luther's request, the counts appointed the same Johann Agricola,[50] a close friend of the Reformer, as rector of the school and pastor in one of Eisleben's churches. Likewise at Luther's suggestion, Albrecht selected Michael Coelius[51] as court preacher at the fortress in Tal Mansfeld and arranged for other evangelical pastors to preside at

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[47] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 230.

[48] For his service to the cause, Count Albrecht received one of the five original copies of the document of alliance produced there.

[49] "Ego enim hac hora vado Eyslebium cum Philippo & M. Eysleben, illuc vocati ab Adelberdo Comite pro instituenda Schola Christiana. . ." *WABr* 3.474–476, here at 474.

[50] Johann Agricola (1492?–1566) was born in Eisleben, and for that reason is often referred to as "Magister Eisleben." Beginning in 1515, he attended the University of Wittenberg where he became a follower of Luther and accompanied him to the Leipzig Disputation as his secretary. In 1519, he earned a bachelor's degree in theology. In 1525, after a short stay in Frankfurt, he was called back to Eisleben, where he became the head of the new evangelical school, which taught young and teenaged students. Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 111–113; and Steffen Kjeldgaard-Pedersen, "Agricola, Johann," *The Oxford Encylopedia of the Reformation*, 1: 10.

[51] Michael Coelius (1492–1559) received his bachelor's degree in philosophy from the University of Leipzig in 1509. In 1512, he was called as a teacher to Döbeln, where among his students was Johann Walther, the famous hymnist and musician. In 1518, the bishop of Merseburg ordained him and he received a call to a pastorate in Grimmitz. The following year he attended the Leipzig Disputation, as a result of which he gave up his pastorate and journeyed to Wittenberg to meet Luther. From there he was called in 1524 to Pensau in Bohemia by an evangelically-minded prince, but soon was forced to flee after being threatened with execution. He returned to Wittenberg, where Luther recommended him to Count Albrecht as pastor in the castle church in the fortress of Mansfeld. When the position of dean was established in Tal Mansfeld, he was appointed to it and was called as pastor to the city church of Tal Mansfeld. Of all the churchmen, Coelius did the most to promote and teach the Reformation in Tal Mansfeld. In his later years, Cyriakus Spangenberg worked as his assistant, taking over Coelius' positions upon his death in 1559. Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 110–111.

two of Eisleben's churches where the count was patron. Establishing evangelical services in Eisleben's St. Andreas church proved more difficult, however, because of resistance from the Vorderort count, Hoyer, who held *ius patronatus* there. Albrecht eventually installed Caspar Güttel as one of the church's clerics, but Hoyer allowed the pastor to hold services only in the afternoons, while the Roman Mass continued to be said during morning services.[52] But because Albrecht held rights of patronage over three of Eisleben's other four churches, Hoyer could do little to stop Albrecht's investment of Reformation-minded pastors there.

But the Vorderort counts continued to resist the Reformation wherever they could. Hoyer refused to allow evangelical services in the fortress of Mansfeld or in churches where the rights of patronage were split between the three dynastic lines. In 1525, Albrecht contemplated using force to push through the Reformation. But Luther urged patience, insisting that where the Vorderort counts held rights of patronage, such as the Tal Mansfeld fortress church,

> Your Grace must do nothing more than bear such outrage. Moreover, elsewhere in the castle, in the hall or pantry, Your Grace must remain steadfast in the gospel in God's name, leaving the foundation church to [the Vorderort counts], outrageous thieves, along with the devil inside. In ten years the situation will be very different. But with regard to the areas of [the territory] ruled in common—that your Grace should also yield there—this cannot be. For it is not a question of lumber, stone, or space, but of conscience.[53]

Meanwhile Count Hoyer called various priests to Tal Mansfeld to preach against the evangelical pastors and for a time at the fortress, Michael Coelius and a monk named Rothkopf traded sermons.[54] At Easter 1530, a disputation was held between the two, both of whom declared themselves the victor.

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[52] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 109.

[53] "E. G. müßt nicht mehr tun denn solchen Frevel leiden ohn Mitverwilligung. Daneben mügen E. G. sonst im Schloß, im Saal oder Stuben dennoch sich des Evangelii halten in Gottes Namen und ihnen die Stiftkirchen als Frevelräubern lassen mit dem Teufel drinnen; es wird doch in zehen Jahren wohl ein anders werden. Daß aber in gemeiner Herrschaft E. G. auch sollt so weichen, das kann nicht sein. Denn hie gehet die Sache nicht Holz, Stein oder Raum, sondern die Gewissen an." *WABr* 3.415–416, here at 415.

[54] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 177.

To St. Andreas in Eisleben, Hoyer called Georg Witzel, a former evangelical who had returned to the Catholic faith in 1533. The count gave Witzel the task of re-establishing Roman practice in Eisleben and there he debated Güttel and Agricola from the pulpit and through pamphlets, occasionally traveling to the fortress of Mansfeld to preach against Coelius. Shortly before his departure from the territory in 1538 Witzel wrote to a friend, "When the faith is in the same situation throughout Germany as in this land, I must flee to Italy or some desert. Here there is nothing else to do but weep. They have entirely taken over this territory, own it without resistance, and are in control of the best benefices. Everything is lost."[55] Witzel's description of the congregation at St. Andreas suggests that not only the pastors, but the people of Eisleben had already moved away from the Roman faith.

> I preach in front of ten citizens, and they themselves are seldom all there at once. I cry to Christ. I call to the church, his bride, but she remains dumb. I believe that the stones themselves hear me, for they are easier to reach than the inhabitants of this city. In such need, I am hardly alive.... Most of the people have left us and follow those who will lead them into the abyss. Barely ten families hold fast to Catholicism. Indeed, they too, listen to the heretics.... The momentum of the schism will also overwhelm this small remaining group. They appear to have lost courage so that they will be unable to withstand the daily assaults very much longer. With David I call out, "All are fallen away."[56]

In Hettstedt and Tal Mansfeld, the other two cities administered jointly by all three dynastic lines, Roman theology and practice quickly gave way to evangelical. By 1524, most Catholic ceremonies had been

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[55] "Wenn es in ganz Deutschland mit dem Glauben so stände, wie in diesem Lande, müßte ich nach Italien oder nach irgend einer Wüste flüchten. Hier bleibt nichts anders übrig, als zu weinen. Dieß Land haben sie ganz eingenommen, besitzen es in Ruhe und bemächtigen sich der besten Pfünden. Jetzt is alles verloren." Georg Witzel, *Epistolarum, Quae inter Aliquot Centurias videbantur partim profuturae Theologicarum literarum studiosis, partim innocentis famam adversus Sycophantiam defensurae, Libri Quatuor. Georgi Wicelii.* (Leipzig: Nicolaus Wolrab, 1537), cited from Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 187.

[56] "Ich Predige vor 10 Bürgern, und auch diese sind selten zusammen gegenwärtig. Ich flehe zu Christo; ich rufe zur Kirche, seiner Braut; aber sie bleibt taub. Ich glaube, selbst die Steine hören mich; denn diese sind eher zu rühren, als die Einwohner dieser Stadt.... Die große Masse ist von uns gewichen und folgt denen, die sie in den Abgrund leiten. Kaum zehn Familien halten noch fest am Katholicismus. Ja, auch sie hören die Ketzer.... Der Fortgang des Schismas wird auch diese geringen Überbleibsel an sich ziehen. Sie scheinen mir verzagt, so daß sie den täglichen Angriffen nicht länger wider stehen werden. Mit David rufe ich: alle sind abgefallen." Georg Witzel, *Epistolarum,* cited from Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 188.

abolished in Tal Mansfeld's city church. In 1530, Simon Agrius became the first evangelical school rector in Tal Mansfeld, followed by Nicolaus Gallus, who would become one of the most vocal Gnesio-Lutherans, the evangelicals' most conservative wing.[57] In the city of Hettstedt, Johann Nohn firmly established the Reformation in 1529, when the Hinterort counts called him as pastor. The evangelical author of the Hettstedt Chronicle writes, "Of all the pastors [of Hettstedt], this man began to preach the holy Gospel, completely and clearly, as it had been brought to the light of day from the Holy Scriptures by Mr. Luther."[58]

The cities under the control of the Vorderort counts—Artern, Heldrungen, Gerbstedt—retained Roman practices and teachings until 1540. In Gerbstedt, resistance from Count Hoyer coupled with the influence of a nearby cloister resulted in the rejection of the burghers' request for an evangelical pastor as late as 1539. Even after Hoyer's death, the cloister allowed a Protestant cleric to enter Gerbstedt to distribute the Eucharist only a few times a year, so that many of the citizens sought evangelical services in the surrounding towns. In 1543, they outfitted a large public building for church services and held the first evangelical meeting on New Year's Day of that year. Nowhere in the territory did priests celebrate the mass longer than in Gerbstedt, where as late as 1565 a sizable faction remained loyal to the Catholic faith.[59]

Little information regarding the spread of the Reformation in the villages is extant, but it stands to reason that those areas of Mansfeld under the control of the Hinterort and Mittelort counts received evangelical pastors at an early date, while those areas controlled by the Vorderort counts were populated by Roman priests until at least 1540. This conjecture is confirmed by the Albertine duke, George of Saxony, who held the regalia for Mansfeld's district of Morungen, where in 1530, he protested the Hinterort counts' introduction of evangelical

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[57] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 198.

[58] "Dieser hat am allermeisten das heilige Evangelium, wie es von Herrn Luther aus der heiligen Schrift an das Tageslicht gebracht, lauter und klar angefangen zu predigen." Andreas Hoppenrodt and ? Titius, *Chronik der Stadt Hettstedt*, fol. 55v. This is an unpublished manuscript begun by Andreas Hoppenrodt, who was alive through the events of the 1570s, and continued by Titius, whose first name I have not been able to discover. This citation comes from the copy found in the Stadtarchiv Eisleben, DXXXVII 134.

[59] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 202.

pastors there. Upon Count Hoyer's death in 1540, with very few exceptions, Mansfeld became evangelical. By 1540, ten of the territory's twelve cloisters ceased to exist.[60] Thus the death of Count Hoyer has traditionally been considered the end of the Catholic faith there.[61]

The Counts and the Schmalkald War

Throughout the sixteenth century and quite clearly during the controversy over original sin, the religio/political traditions established early in the Reformation continued to guide the alliances and policies of Mansfeld's various dynastic lines of counts. Nowhere can these conventions be observed more clearly than in the comital exploits during the Schmalkald War. Keeping with their practice of supporting the Albertine Saxons, the Vorderort count, Hans Georg, governor (*Statthalter*) for Duke Moritz of Saxony, and his brothers fought for the duke and the emperor against the Schmalkald League of Protestants. In a surprising and aberrant change of policy, the Mittelort count, Gebhard, followed their lead, despite being a founding member of the League. The Hinterort count, Albrecht, and his sons (Volrad, Wolf, Hans, and Carl) honored their commitment to the League, attaching themselves to the army of the Ernestine elector of Saxony, John Fredrick, in summer of 1546.

Thus the counts of Mansfeld played integral roles on both sides in the war, which left deep scars in the empire and the territory itself.[62] At the command of Moritz, Hans Georg helped besiege Weimar, until John Fredrick and his army drove the count away and, as punishment, took the Vorderort fortress of Heldrungen in Mansfeld. At Christmas

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[60] Widerstedt was closed in 1547 and Gerbstedt not until 1576. Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 217.

[61] Emmerling suggests that the sons of Vorderort count, Ernest (d. 1531), who were heirs of the childless Count Hoyer (d. 1540), embraced the evangelical faith in the late thirties. After the death of their uncle Hoyer, they removed Georg Witzel from St. Andreas in Eisleben and replaced him with an evangelical pastor. It soon became apparent that the new pastor taught the Zwinglian view of the Eucharist, leading to his expulsion in 1541. Thus, writes Emmerling, the Reformation was established finally in 1541. Emmerling, *Emmerlingii Propylaeum historiae*, 19.

[62] I recount the actions of the various dynastic lines during the Schmalkald War in some detail here because, particularly in the case of the Hinterort line, their involvement in the war became a major component of their self-identity, with significant results during the controversy over original sin. See chapter four, "The Counts and the Controversy," esp. [158 ff.].

1546, shortly after his son Wolf died in the campaign, Count Albrecht returned to Mansfeld, where he plundered the houses of his Vorderort cousins' supporters and seized the Vorderort portion of the territory. Albrecht forced the citizens of Eisleben and Tal Mansfeld to revoke their oath of allegiance to the Vorderort counts and swear fealty to him alone.

Early in 1547, Albrecht and his son Hans assisted the League in the unsuccessful siege of Leipzig, while Albrecht's son, the young Count Volrad, took part in the surprise attack on Margrave Albrecht of Brandenburg-Kulmbach, who was allied with the emperor. Volrad's soldiers captured the Margrave and Volrad himself took one of the enemy's standards, which he presented to the elector, who, in turn, sent it to Count Albrecht as proof of his son's military prowess.[63] Meanwhile the elector commissioned Albrecht with the command of an army and sent him to assist the Protestant city of Bremen, besieged by the emperor's forces under the command of the duke of Braunschweig. The two armies met on Weser River near Drachenburg, where Albrecht achieved a great victory, killing nearly 2,000 of the enemy, capturing about 2,500, and watching another 1,000 or so drown in their attempt to escape across the river.[64]

But the triumph was short-lived, as the emperor captured the elector a few weeks later. John Fredrick lost his right of electorship to Duke Moritz of Saxony, and the emperor forced him to return the lands he had conquered, including the fortress of Heldrungen in Mansfeld, to their original owner. Count Albrecht and his sons forfeited their holdings in the territory to the other two dynastic lines and went into exile. The Vorderort and Mittelort counts returned to Mansfeld, received homage from its citizens anew, and imprisoned citizens loyal to Albrecht. Meanwhile, Swabish imperial troops ransacked those parts of the territory formerly under Hinterort control. Upon their return to the territory, the Vorderort and Mittelort counts found themselves in a difficult position, however, for the emperor, for whose cause they had fought, now demanded that they reintroduce Catholicism there. For the sake of appearance, they accepted the emperor's Interim, while promising their own theologians that nothing would change.

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[63] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 290.
[64] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 291.

Meanwhile, imperial troops surrounded Magdeburg and that city, which had refused to capitulate during the Schmalkald War, endured a siege from September 16, 1550 until November 9, 1551. Outside its walls, Count Hans Georg accompanied the imperial troops, while inside, his cousin, Count Albrecht, defended the city in his capacity as commander of the fortress in Magdeburg. Along with his son Hans, Albrecht fought for the city *gratis*, and the count's wife, Anna, who refused to leave her husband's side, was injured by a stray bullet. At the same time, Albrecht's son, Volrad, scoured Lower Saxony for willing recruits whom he planned to lead in an attack on the forces besieging Magdeburg. When little support from the maritime cities was forthcoming, he had no choice but to capitulate to Moritz of Saxony on June 7, 1551. The fall of Magdeburg on November 9, 1551 left Albrecht and his family homeless once again, but for his loyalty, the emperor awarded Count Hans Georg and his brothers a fief that had been under the control of Magdeburg.

But the capitulation of Magdeburg shifted the balance of power in the empire away from the princes and toward the emperor, a situation that the new elector Moritz quickly realized was dangerous to his own interests. Switching sides, he allied with the defeated Protestant princes and began a military campaign against the emperor, which Albrecht of Mansfeld soon joined.[65] This time the Protestants' quick success led to the Peace of Passau, signed on August 2, 1552. Article seven of the document restored Albrecht to the emperor's good graces and returned all lands to the Hinterort line.[66] On November 9, 1552, Albrecht returned to Mansfeld after five years in exile.

Reconciliation among the dynastic lines did not come easily, however, and was only achieved through the mediation of the young Hinterort counts, Volrad and Hans, and the young Vorderort counts, Hans Ernst and Hans Hoyer. In autumn, 1555, the Vorderort count, Hans Georg, and the Hinterort count, Albrecht, finally signed a contract of peace, which they cemented the following year when three of the younger Vorderort counts married daughters of Albrecht.[67] Two years later in 1557, the brothers, Counts Gebhard and Albrecht, originators of the Mittelort and Hinterort lines respectively, also made

[65] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 297.
[66] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 299.
[67] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 310.

their peace so that by the end of the 1550s, calm reigned among Mansfeld's counts.

Although the counts reconciled following the upheavals of the Schmalkald war, the experience exacerbated essential differences in political and religious orientation that had first manifested themselves during the Reformation. The Vorderort counts gravitated toward Albertine Saxony, with its close ties to the emperor which, although it became Protestant, showed a willingness to compromise in questions of religion. The Hinterort demonstrated distinct inclinations toward Ernestine Saxony, which continued to oppose the emperor and insist on a more conservative brand of Lutheranism. With the humiliating defeat of the Ernestines, the Hinterort counts lost a powerful political ally.[68] As a result, in the future, Albrecht's sons Volrad and Carl could not rely to the same degree on Ernestine support and would be forced to attempt more of a policy of independence. This political and religious configuration remained the basis of the divisions during the controversy over original sin.

The Development of an Evangelical Church Structure

In addition to the content of belief and the pattern of political loyalties established by the early Reformation, Mansfeld's ecclesiastical organization also underwent a transformation that would have deep consequences for lay religiosity there. In teaching and practice, Mansfeld's church had been reformed by 1540, but its structure had remained unaffected, as Caspar Güttel's initial church ordinance for

[68] It is worth noting that the Ernestines' loss of the electorship following the Schmalkald War resulted in a new focus of their religious politics, one that sharpened the concentration on a Martin-Luther-oriented interpretation of the Augsburg Confession (rather than a Melanchthonian interpretation), thereby differentiating the Ernestines from their Albertine rivals. So, to a certain degree, in their religious politics following the Schmalkald War, the Mittelort and Hinterort counts merely continued their orientation toward the Ernestines. See Daniel Gehrt, "Kurfürst Johann Friedrich I. und die ernestinische Konfessionspolitik zwishen 1548 und 1580," in *Johann Friedrich I—der lutherische Kurfürst*, Volker Leppin, Georg Schmit, and Sabine Wefers, eds. (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlaghaus, 2006), 307–326; and Daniel Gehrt, "Die Anfänge einer konfessionell bestimmten Identität in Thüringen und den ernestinischen Landen," in *Kirche und Regionalbewusstsein in der Frühen Neuzeit: Konfessionell bestimmte Identifikationsprozesse in den Territorien*, Irene Dingel and Günther Wartenberg, eds. (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2009), 53–68.

the territory made no mention of a central administration.[69] The first step in establishing a territorial church structure came in 1546, when Luther and Melanchthon composed a church ordinance for Mansfeld. Throughout the 1530s and 1540s, tensions between the dynastic lines had been increasing as a result of the counts' deteriorating economic situation. Each line endeavored to wring more income from its citizens and fellow counts. Moreover, differences of opinion regarding the Reformation and questions over rights of patronage for certain key ecclesiastical positions exacerbated the ill-will. Luther was personally involved in both aspects of the dispute. On more than one occasion, he intervened on behalf of friends and relatives in the territory, who complained that certain counts were misappropriating private property, in particular components of private mining and smelting concerns. In addition, as the most respected Protestant ecclesiastical authority, the counts requested that he settle the controversy over church patronage. Between January 28 and Luther's death on February 18, 1546, he and Melanchthon resided in Eisleben, composing an ordinance that served as the blueprint for Mansfeld's territorial church for the remainder of the century.

The plan transformed the chief clerical position at St. Andreas in Eisleben into a superintendenture, to be filled by the consensus of all counts. Patronage over St. Andreas's other two clerical positions fell to members of the Vorderort line, while the Hinterort line received *ius patronatus* for St. Peter and Paul's church in Eisleben. The two schools attached to St. Andreas Church were merged into one Latin school with a rector and seven teachers. In Tal Mansfeld, the counts jointly chose the dean in the castle church and pastor of the city church. The dean supervised all clerics in Tal Mansfeld, but fell, himself, under the authority of the superintendent in Eisleben. Finally, the church agenda required each fifth of the territory to provide 15 florins per year for the improvement and maintenance of the city's school.[70]

Luther and Melanchthon also sketched the contours that the consistory would eventually take, granting the responsibility for monitoring the morals of the pastors and teachers to the superintendent, and all marriage issues throughout the territory to the superintendent and counts. When marriage disputes were of a temporal nature, the

[69] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 276.
[70] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 273–274.

counts were to decide, but if of a spiritual nature, they were to consult the superintendent and pastors. At Luther's recommendation, the counts appointed Johann Spangenberg (1484–1550)[71] as the territory's first superintendent. Neither he, nor his successor, Georg Major (1502–1574),[72] who was expelled for suspect doctrine after only one year, made any attempts to change the consistory's simple structure. Mansfeld's third superintendent, Erasmus Sarcerius (1500–1559),[73]

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[71] Johann Spangenberg was born in Hardegsen on March 30, 1484. He received a degree from the University of Erfurt, after which he was called by the count of Stolberg to be school rector. In 1520, he was called to be archdean in that territory, at the same time declaring himself for Luther's teachings. In 1524, he was called as pastor to Nordhausen, where he helped to introduce the Reformation to that city and began writing for the Reformation cause. Through Justas Jonas he became acquainted with Luther and Melanchthon, the former of whom recommended him for the position in Eisleben. He served as superintendent from 1546 until his death in 1550, but without having much impact on the church outside of Eisleben. Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 345–347.

[72] Georg Major was born in Nuremberg in 1502, and studied in Wittenberg. In 1529, he was called as rector to Magdeburg, but returned in 1536 to Wittenberg, this time as a professor. After the Schmalkald War, he followed Melanchthon into the service of Elector Moritz of Saxony and became deeply involved in the formulation of the Leipzig Interim. He was called to Eisleben in 1551, but due to an outbreak of the plague, arrived first in 1552. At the time, the Hinterort count, Albrecht IV, was in exile, and the Vorderort count, Hans Georg, in the service of Elector Moritz, was searching for a superintendent inclined toward the Interim. Mansfeld's strictly conservative pastorate opposed Major precisely because of his support for the Interim. Furthermore, Major was under suspicion for his teachings on salvation, which many believed included the necessity of good works. After promising not to change the doctrine or customs of Mansfeld's church, the Eisleben clergy allowed him to take his position, but he soon began preaching suspect theology, which led to controversy. The debate was carried on in print as well as from the pulpits, one of his sermons drawing sharp responses from the Tal Mansfeld pastors, Michael Coelius and Johan Wigand. During the controversy, Count Albrecht returned from his exile and immediately sent his son, Carl, to dismiss Major for "destroying the peace within the church." If he failed to leave, the count threatened harsher measures. Major returned to Wittenberg that same night. Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 347–348; and Robert Kolb, "Major, Georg," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, 2: 501–502.

[73] Erasmus Sarcerius was born in 1500 in Annaberg, but received his education in Leipzig. During his lifetime he held positions in Lübeck, Rostock, Gräz, Siegen, Leipzig and elsewhere. In 1546, he was expelled from Siegen, where he was superintendent, on account of his opposition to the Interim. From there he went to Leipzig until 1553, when he was called as superintendent of Mansfeld. There he did much to extend and define the church structure, established the practice of parish visitations, carried out three of them, and wrote extensively. Disagreement over whether the counts or clergy should have the right to impose the ecclesiastical bann led to conflict with the Mittelort and Hinterort counts, who dismissed him in 1559. From there he took a call to Magdeburg as a pastor, but died only weeks after beginning his duties. Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 349. C.f. James Spalding, "Discipline as a Mark of the True Church in Its Sixteenth Century Lutheran Context," in Carter Lindberg,

however, established a permanent consistory composed of five comital councilors,[74] Eisleben's three chief pastors,[75] along with the archdean of St. Andreas church in Eisleben, and the dean of Tal Mansfeld in the role of assessor. The superintendent himself remained the supervisor and cast the deciding vote, distinguishing Mansfeld's consistory from most other Protestant territorial churches in Germany where the temporal authorities retained ultimate control of church courts.[76] With Sarcerius the consistory began to take an active role in monitoring and shaping lay behavior.

Hieronymus Mencel (1517–1590),[77] who succeeded Sarcerius in 1560, added to the consistory's constitution, giving the court jurisdiction over the examination and ordination of clergy, all marriage issues, any questions related to the duties of the pastors, church goods, doctrine, decisions over ecclesiastical punishment, and the spiritual bann. During Mencel's tenure from 1560–1590, the consistory met on the first Monday of each month and had the authority to summon individuals and the power of the temporal authorities to ensure that the summons was obeyed. Following a hearing, the consistory notified the parishioner's pastor if he should exclude the individual from the congregation. Should the sinner desire reconciliation with the congregation, he announced his intention to the pastor and officially revoked his evil ways in front of the congregation.[78] If an individual considered

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ed., *Piety, Politics and Ethics* (Kirksville, Mo.: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1984), 119–139; and Derk Visser, "Sarcerius, Erasmus," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, 3: 483.

[74] Three from the Vorderort and one each from the Mittelort and Hinterort.

[75] These were the pastors of St. Nicolai's, St. Peter and Paul's, and St. Anne's churches.

[76] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 331.

[77] Hieronymus Mencel, born in Schweidnitz in 1517, was the son of a towel maker. With the financial support of his teachers, he went to study in Wittenberg in 1539. In 1542, the counts of Mansfeld called him to Eisleben as a teacher in the Latin school. In 1551, upon receiving his degree in Wittenberg, he became co-rector of the school and, two years later, Count Albrecht appointed him pastor of St. Nicolai's church in Eisleben. In 1560, all the counts in conjunction raised him to the position of superintendent, where he remained until his death in 1590. Max Koennecke, ed. "Die evangelischen Kirchenvisitationen in der Grafschaft Mansfeld," *Mansfelder Blätter* 14 (1900), 37–41; and Wilhelm Beste, *Die bedeutendsten nachreformatorischen Kanzelredner der lutherschen Kirche des XVI. Jahrhunderts, in Biographieen und einer Auswahl ihrer Predigten* (Leipzig: Gustav Meyer, 1858), 33–35.

[78] For the ordinances regarding Mansfeld's consistory see Emil Sehling, ed. *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (various cities, various publishers, 1902–1977), 2.2: 195–213.

the consistory's judgment unjust, Mencel allowed for a direct appeal to the counts.[79] Many laymen and -women would appear before this court during the conflict over original sin.

But Sarcerius also made other changes to the church's structure that would have important consequences during the controversy. As superintendent, he realized that he could not monitor the doctrine and behavior of all the pastors and congregations simultaneously. As something of a pioneer among Lutherans in establishing mechanisms to ensure moral conduct among the laity, he proposed the establishment of a deanery, inspectors or deans chosen from among the pastors, whose role it was to observe the morals and practices of the clergy and laity in their district. Although resistance from the counts meant that Sarcerius could never realize his plans, his successor, Mencel, was able to establish a deanery with nine deans.[80] On a congregational level, the policing of morals was also addressed when Sarcerius established the position of presbyter (*Sehenschöpfer*), four per congregation. These laymen, picked from among the most respected congregants, noted public sins and accompanied the pastor to admonish the malefactor. If the sinner remained recalcitrant, the presbyter had the task of remanding him to the consistory. This decentralization of power in the church would allow the easy growth of an opposition party during the controversy, particularly in the area of Tal Mansfeld.

Another means by which to police morals and beliefs among the laity was through parish visitations. Although they began prior to Sarcerius's superintendency, he was responsible for truly institutionalizing them. In 1555, he produced an order for visitations in which he outlined their substance and legislated their frequency.[81] Their focus

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[79] In 1587, Mencel and the ecclesiastical hierarchy produced a new consistorial constitution in which they raised the number of court members to thirteen, six from among the temporal authorities and seven from among the ecclesiastical authorities. Furthermore, the consistory was given authority to inspect the print shops, the owners of which had been warned to print only works that honored God and to avoid sectarian writings. The new constitution also indicated that the consistory would decide all controversies over doctrine according to the Bible, the confessions (as explained by the *Formula of Concord*), and Luther's writings. Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 332–333.

[80] These he located in Tal Mansfeld, Artern, Friedeburg, Rammelburg, Morungen, Schraplau, Dederstedt, Helbra, and Leimbach. Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 335.

[81] Erasmus Sarcerius, *Von Jarlicher Visitation, und was hiedurch fur mengel, und gebrechen, fast an allen orten mogen befunden werden, und wie diese beides durch die weltliche Obrigkeit, und durch die Kirchen diener in gemein sollen gebessert Werden.*

was threefold: to ensure that the pastors taught and conducted themselves properly, to monitor and correct the doctrinal understanding and moral behavior of the laity, and to assess and improve the material welfare and buildings of the parishes.[82] Between 1540 and 1580, the ecclesiastical and temporal authorities conducted eight visitations, most of them based on Sarcerius's model.

Church synods helped keep the territory's pastors orthodox. During the second half of the sixteenth century, the superintendents of Mansfeld convened eight of them. The first met in 1554 to respond to George Major's suspect teachings on the necessity of good works for salvation. The second synod was convened in 1557 to unify praxis regarding the sacraments, marriage, and burials in the territory.[83] The drafting of a letter in support of the Protestants in France provided the impetus for the third synod, which took place in 1562. The fourth, held in 1564, resulted in the composition of a territorial confession, which declared the territory's conservative, Gnesio-Lutheran position on the various theological controversies that had arisen after Luther's death. In 1568, Mencel convened the fifth synod to discuss Mansfeld's position over against the Philippist theologians of Albertine Saxony. The critique of Saxony's churchmen by members of Mansfeld's pastorate had enraged the elector of Saxony, necessitating an official response from the church in Mansfeld. The sixth synod, held in 1572, was called to unify the pastorate over issue of original sin and is discussed in chapter two of this study. Mencel gathered the pastorate a seventh time in 1576 to eject any pastors who held fast to the position on original sin now deemed heretical by the church in Mansfeld. There the superintendent admonished all pastors to report colleagues who preached against the official teachings of the church on the issue of original sin. The eighth synod, held in 1580, was convened to officially accept the *Formula of Concord*. There the church of Mansfeld also

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Fur diese, welche die jarliche Visitation auffziehen verhindern, und fur unnotig achten (Eisleben: Urban Gaubisch, 1555).

[82] See Richard Nürnberger, "Die Kirchenvisitationen in der Grafschaft Mansfeld während der Reformationszeit," *Festschrift für Friedrich von Zahn*, 2 vols., Walter Schlesinger, ed. (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1968), 1: 313–343.

[83] The product of this synod was the following publication: The Pastorate of Mansfeld, *Etliche Artickel/ so sich die Pastor und Seelsorger/ in der alten und löblichen Graffschafft Mansfeld/ unter den Wolgebornen und Edlen Graffen so man nennet/ die Jungen Herrn/ gesessen/ in einem Synodo verglichen haben* (Eisleben: Urban Gaubisch, 1557).

decided that each dean was to examine the theology of the pastors in his district twice annually.[84] Thus the orthodoxy of the pastorate was carefully policed.

In 1562, under Mencel, the pastorate also composed a new church ordinance (expanded in 1580), prior to which Luther's Saxon ordinance had been used. Read from the pulpit twice a year, it was divided into eight chapters: baptism, consecration (*einsegnen*) of the mother, marriage, confession and absolution, the sacrament of the Eucharist, the catechism, the attendance of church services, and burial.[85] The church ordinance set the standard for both practice and doctrine in the territory.

The Character of Protestantism in Mansfeld

From the very beginning, Mansfeld's evangelical church had close ties to the very center of the Reformation, and would become one of its most vociferous defenders. This history would fashion a conservative brand of Lutheranism in which close adherence to the precise ideas and meanings of Luther's sermons and writings was paramount, a fact not lost on the laity. It started with the individual churchmen who lived and worked in Mansfeld, many of whose influence reached well beyond the borders of the territory. In addition to Güttel, Agricola, Johann Spangenberg, Coelius, and Sarcerius, men such as Johannes Aurifaber,[86]

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[84] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 336.

[85] Sehling, *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen*, 2.2: 215–248.

[86] One of the chief sources of Luther's *Tischreden*, Johannes Aurifaber (1519?–1575) had close ties to Mansfeld. He attended the University of Wittenberg from 1537–1540, and for the next four years was the household teacher of the Hinterort Count Albrecht's sons (Volrad, Hans, and Carl). In 1545, he returned to Wittenberg, where he became Luther's personal attendant until the Reformer's death the following year, after which, the Ernestine duke of Saxony and Count Albrecht called him to be a military chaplain during the Schmalkald War. Following the Peace of Augsburg (1555), he was given the task of editing Luther's letters for the Jena Edition of the Reformer's works, in the process of which he discovered 200 missives with Spalatin's widow, 250 with Justus Jonas, and a stack with Luther's children. A feud with Duke John Frederick (known at the time as 'the middle one') in 1561 led him to publish two volumes of Luther's letters in Eisleben rather than Jena, with the support of the Hinterort count, Volrad. He dedicated the first volume to Volrad's brother, Count Carl, and stayed in Eisleben until 1565, when he was called to Erfurt, where he remained until his death in 1575. Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 355, n. 1; William R. Russel, "Aurifaber, Johannes," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, 1: 101–102.

Stephan Agricola,[87] Christopher Irenaeus,[88] Wilhelm Sarcerius,[89] Conrad Porta,[90] and Johann Wigand,[91] most of whom belong to the second generation of reformers and carried the standard of conservative Lutheranism, worked in or had close ties to Mansfeld.

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[87] Stephan Agricola (Kastenbauer) (1491–1547) began his career as a monk, Doctor of Theology, and father confessor to princess Anna of Hungary. Through Luther's writings he was drawn to the Protestant cause, for which he spent two years in prison in Salzburg. Thereafter he was called as pastor to Augsburg were he remained until the early 1540s. He attended the Colloquy of Marburg (1529), and the Diet of Augsburg (1530), and signed the Schmalkald articles in 1537. In c. 1543, the Hinterort count, Albrecht IV, called him to be court preacher in Eisleben, a position he held until his death. Agricola was known for having translated a number of Luther's writings from Latin into German. See Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 352; and Karin Brinkmann Brown, "Agricola, Stephan," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, 1: 12.

[88] Christopher Irenaeus, among the most devoted followers of Matthias Flacius Illyricus, was born in Schweidnitz and studied in Wittenberg, where he was counted among Melanchthon's students. The Ernestine Saxons called him as court pastor to Weimar in 1562, but he was quickly expelled from that position along with the rest of the followers of Flacius. Thereafter, the Hinterort count, Volrad, called him to St. Peter and Paul's church in Eisleben, where he remained until 1566, when he was recalled to Weimar. In 1572, he was again expelled from Ernestine lands for his vocal critique of the Philippist theologians during the Synergism controversy, and he returned to Mansfeld, where Volrad installed him as court pastor in the fortress church in Tal Mansfeld. In 1574, along with Cyriakus Spangenberg, he was expelled from the territory during the debate over original sin and went into exile in Austria. Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 353.

[89] Wilhelm Sarcerius, (d. 1582), son of the superintendent Erasmus Sarcerius, followed Irenaeus as pastor of St. Peter and Paul's in 1567. A follower of Flacius, he was expelled at the same time as Cyriakus Spangenberg in 1574, after which time he was supported by the Hinterort count, Volrad, before becoming superintendent of Styne in 1580. Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 353.

[90] Conrad Porta (1541–1585) became pastor at St. Peter and Paul's after the dismissal of Sarcerius in 1575. He had begun his career in the territory as co-rector of the Latin school in Eisleben. In 1569, he was named to the clergy at St. Andreas church. He is best known for his *Pastorale Lutheri* of 1582, a work in which he collected Luther's writings on various pastoral issues.

[91] Johann Wigand (1523–1587) was born in Tal Mansfeld and matriculated at the University of Wittenberg in 1538. Three years later he began his career as a teacher in Nuremberg, but returned to Wittenberg in 1544 to receive his doctorate. Called as city pastor to Tal Mansfeld in 1546, he was the first cleric ordained by the superintendent Johann Spangenberg. His writings against the Interim made him known in wider circles, and in 1553 he was called to be a pastor and superintendent in Magdeburg. There he participated in the compilation of the church history, *The Magdeburg Centuries*, until called to Jena as a professor in 1560. A Gnesio-Lutheran, he remained a close adherent of Flacius until 1567, when the two he split over the issue of original sin. Wigand wrote a book against Flacius, which he sent to his former colleagues in Mansfeld, sparking the controversy over original sin there. Thereafter he became one of Flacius' staunchest opponents. William R. Russell, "Wigand, Johann," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, 4: 272–273.

Two of these men in particular played pivotal roles in the debate over original sin in Mansfeld, the superintendent, Hieronymus Mencel, and the dean in Tal Mansfeld, Cyriakus Spangenberg (1528–1604). Until they split over original sin in 1572, the men worked shoulder to shoulder as equals constructing Mansfeld's church, despite their disparate positions in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Nor do personal or professional animosities appear to have caused or exacerbated their split, as Spangenberg recommended Mencel for the position of superintendent after the former had declined it for himself.

Cyriakus Spangenberg (1528–1604),[92] son of Johann Spangenberg, held the position of dean and city pastor in Tal Mansfeld, as well as that of court preacher at the fortress of Mansfeld. He was raised in Eisleben and after studying in Wittenberg returned in 1551 as a schoolteacher. During the 1550s and 1560s he became one of Mansfeld's most forceful, influential, and learned personalities, engaging in a variety of literary debates with Catholics and Philippists outside the territory. His pamphlets and sermons on the issue of original sin turned Tal Mansfeld into the *de facto* headquarters of the group who took his position, designated by their contemporaries as the Substantiers or Mansfelders.

Their opponents were referred to as the Accidenters or Eislebeners because they were centered in Eisleben. Chief among them was Hieronymus Mencel. Like Spangenberg, he had studied at Wittenberg (1539–1541), entering the employ of the Mansfeld counts in 1542 as a teacher and subsequently spending his entire career in the territory, where he rose to pastor and finally superintendent, a position he held until his death in 1590.[93]

Doctrinal controversy was a fact of life among adherents to the Augsburg Confession during the second half of the sixteenth century and Mansfeld's pastorate was no stranger to the conflicts. But until the debate over original sin, the churchmen always managed to

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[92] The most complete biography of Spangenberg is still Johann Georg Leuckfelds, *Historische Nachricht von dem Leben/ Lehre und Schrifften Cyriaci Spangenbergs* (Quedlinburg and Aschersleben: Gottlob Ernst Struntz, 1712). More accessible and also very detailed is Heinrich Rembe's biographical chapter that serves as an introduction to his edition of Spangenberg's *Formularbüchlein der alten Adamsprache* (Heinrich J. Naumann: Dresden, 1887 [Eisleben: Urban Gaubisch, 1563]), 5–64. Rembe also includes a bibliography of most of Spangenberg's works. *Der Briefwechsel des M. Cyricaus Spangenberg*, Heinrich Rembe, ed. 2 vols. (Dresden: 1887–1888), although woefully incomplete, provides details of Spangenberg's life between 1550 and 1584. For more bibliography, especially in English, see Robert Kolb, "Spangenberg, Cyriakus," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, 4: 99–100.

[93] For more biography on Mencel, see note [77].

find theological unity. Already in the 1530s, Luther's friend, Johann Agricola, rector of the Latin school and pastor at St. Andreas Church in Eisleben, began to teach antinomianism—that the law did not demonstrate sin to humankind, rather Christ's passion did. The Mansfeld pastorate rejected Agricola's doctrine as antithetical to Luther's view that the law functioned as a mirror of sin, and eventually the Reformer himself wrote against his old friend. By 1540, the clergy of Mansfeld forced Agricola to leave the territory.

But the most serious challenges to doctrinal unity arose as a result of the Interim, the political and religious conditions placed on the Protestants after their defeat in the Schmalkald War (1547). When the emperor's command to impose the Interim within twenty days arrived, the Hinterort count, Albrecht, and his son Volrad, Rome's fiercest opponents among the counts, were in exile for supporting the Protestants during the war. In accordance with the Interim, the remaining counts promised to re-institute the ceremonies of the Roman church, but only to the extent that they conformed to Luther's central article of salvation. But, they warned the emperor, they did not know the degree to which their subjects, in particular the miners, would allow them to realize his command.[94]

On August 12, 1548, the pastors of Mansfeld openly rejected the Interim, and as a result, few changes in religious teaching or praxis occurred in the territory. The real problems began in 1549, however, when Elector Moritz of Saxony commanded his theologians to produce their own document, designed to accommodate the emperor and Roman faith to the degree possible, while retaining the central doctrines of Protestantism. Authored by Melanchthon and his followers (the Philippists), the document came to be known as the Leipzig Interim. Despised in most Protestant circles for conceding too much, it spawned a series of doctrinal controversies that plagued the Protestants for the rest of the century. Led by Johann Spangenberg and Michael Coelius, the pastors of Mansfeld roundly rejected the Leipzig Interim and convinced the counts (who had accepted it) not to penalize them for teaching conservative Protestant doctrine.

But not everyone in Mansfeld was entirely opposed to the document. In the hands of Georg Major, Mansfeld's second superintendent, the Leipzig Interim provided the fodder for the next theological controversy

[94] Counts Gebhart, Hans George, Hans Albrecht and Hans Ernst, "Derer Herren Graffen von Mansfeld Antwort," 725.

to rock the territory. Melanchthon had included the phrase, "…so it is certainly true that these virtues, faith, love, hope, and others, must be in us and are necessary for salvation."[95] Major used this statement to claim that good works were obligatory for salvation, and although he intended only to condemn dead faith, theologically his statement was difficult to defend among the conservative pastors in Mansfeld. Count Albrecht, recently returned to the territory after an imperial pardon, dismissed Major, whose successor, Erasmus Sarcerius, then called a synod in which the pastors of Mansfeld condemned Major's teachings.

Other controversies followed, most of which failed to find fertile ground in Mansfeld. Nonetheless the ubiquity of doctrinal disputes during this period convinced the Mansfeld clergy to produce a clear and public territorial confession, for into the church, they claimed, "…the papacy has forced its way, together with all kinds of false teachings, misuse of the sacrament and corruption of worship."[96] To this end, in 1559, the pastorate produced a statement that confirmed their conservative, Gnesio-Lutheran views on Anabaptism, Antitrinitarianism, the teachings of the Jesuits, antinomianism, sacramentarianism, teachings on the freedom of the will, the question of the role of good works in salvation, and adiaphora.

From the perspective of Mansfeld's pastors, doctrinal orthodoxy among the Lutherans continued to deteriorate nonetheless. In the early 1560s, they accused various Protestant theologians from the universities of Wittenberg, Leipzig (both in Albertine Saxony), and Jena (Ernestine Saxony) of promoting synergism, a variation on the teaching that the free will of the human being contributed to the work of conversion. Again the Mansfeld pastors vociferously rejected the necessity of good works for salvation and produced a second, expanded confession in 1565 that pointedly addressed this and other disagree-

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[95] Philipp Melanchthon et al., "The Leipzig Interim," in Robert Kolb and James A. Nestingen, eds. *Sources and Contexts of The Book of Concord*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001), 183–196, here at 190. On the document itself, see *Melanchthons Briefwechsel, Kritische und kommentierte Gesamtausgabe*, Heinz Scheible with assistance from Walter Thüringer, ed., (Stuttgart-Bad Connstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1987), 5: 400–401.

[96] "…ist auch das Bapstumb eingerissen/ sampt allerley falschen Leren/ misbrauch der Sacrament/ und ertichten Gottesdienst." The Pastorate of Mansfeld, *Bekentnis der Prediger in der Grafschaft Mansfeld/ unter den jungen Herren gesessen, wider alle Secten/ Rotten/ und falschen Leren/ wider Gottes wort/ die reine Lere D. Luthers seligen/ und der Augspurgischen Confession/ an etlichen örten eingeschlichen/ mit Notwendiger widerlegunge derselbigen* (Eisleben: Urban Gaubisch, 1560), 7.

ments with the Saxon theologians. As a result, Mencel, Spangenberg, and other Mansfeld theologians became embroiled in controversy with Saxony's theologians, further cementing their own reputation as protectors of orthodox Lutheran doctrine. In 1566, their conservative reputation led to a request by the Antwerp community for Mansfeld's pastors to establish a Lutheran church in their city, and Spangenberg and three colleagues obliged.[97] Furthermore, pastors from territories outside Mansfeld who had been expelled for their conservative views found welcomed refuge and often new positions in the territory.[98] But despite their generally conservative stance, the pastors would find no common ground in the debate over original sin.

Socio-Economic Changes in Mansfeld in the Sixteenth Century

In order to fully contextualize lay religiosity in Mansfeld, one final aspect of life there requires introduction: changes to the mining industry during the course of the sixteenth century. Throughout the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, profits from the mining industry soared, allowing the counts to buy up surrounding districts.[99] Increases in mining production also led to social changes in the territory, for it was during this period that the position of smelter master (*Hüttenmeister*) came into existence. Small entrepreneurs, these individuals oversaw the operating units of the mining enterprise, each of which performed every step in the process from the extraction of ore on plots leased to them by the counts, to its smelting in their own ovens (*Erbfeuer*) or in ovens owned by the counts (*Herrenfeuer*). The rapid increase in production lured ambitious foreigners to the area, among them Hans

[97] Spangenberg and his colleagues traveled to Antwerp in 1566, where they composed a church order, which they subsequently published in Germany to demonstrate their own orthodoxy. Cyriakus Spangenberg, *Agenda. Christliche Kirchenordnung der Gemeine Gottes/ so in Antdorff der waren/ reinen/ unverfelschten Augspurgischen Confession zugethan* (Michel Schmuck: Schmalkalden, 1567).

[98] At least six pastors who had been expelled from Thuringia for condemning what they considered synergistic doctrine found new homes in Mansfeld, which itself had c. 100 pastors in all.

[99] These included Hettstedt (1439), Rammelburg (1440), Friedeburg and Salzmünde (1442), Artern (1452), Heldrungen (1483/84), Allstedt (1525 for the second time), Rothenburg (1527), and Sittichenbach (1540). Franz Kern, "Der Mansfelder Bergbau und die Geschichte der Grafschaft Mansfeld," *Mansfelder Heimatblätter* 7 (1932): 134.

Luther, father of the Reformer, who, shortly before Martin's birth, left his home in Thuringia for Eisleben before settling permanently in Tal Mansfeld in 1484.[100]

But the mining industry's structure began to change in the early sixteenth century with the introduction of the Nuremberg form of smelting-works into the territory. Until that time, smelting had taken place in temporary buildings where the mined slate was melted into raw and black copper, but the silver and copper remained unseparated. The new technique allowed the silver and refined copper to be extracted on site in permanent buildings, a process so expensive that it proved beyond the means of Mansfeld's smelting bosses. As a result, wealthy individuals and *Saiger* corporations from Nuremberg and Leipzig gradually purchased rights to process Mansfeld's copper, a change that by mid-century resulted in the extinction of the position of smelting boss.

Along with the technical changes in the business, the smelter masters were further challenged by Count Albrecht's efforts to bring mining and smelting under direct comital control. To increase his own revenues, Albrecht attempted to capture a share of the smelting by changing the legal contract that gave the counts common control of the Herrenfeuer and Erbfeuer. In 1535, he forced the division of the mines and smelting operations among the Vorderort, Mittelort, and Hinterort, receiving for himself the 24 Erbfeuer and 33 Herrenfeuer, all of which he pushed mercilessly to increase production. The Vorderort and Mittelort counts followed his lead, and by 1546, the last of the Erbfeuer came under comital ownership—a process which Luther decried repeatedly, arguing for the rights of his relatives in the territory's mining industry.[101]

The counts' increased control of the mining industry brought neither the desired expansion in production, nor more profit. The Schmalkald War, the expense of maintaining a presence in the courts of various princes, and the repeated division of the territory served only to increase the counts' debt. By the 1560s, they were forced out of mining altogether and could obtain credit only by pledging various districts under their control as guarantors. Power over the mining industry became increasingly concentrated in the hands of the wealthy corporations (*Saigergesellschaften*) from outside the territory.

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[100] Brecht, *Martin Luther: His Road to Reformation*, 2.
[101] Westermann, "Der wirtschaftliche Konzentrationsprozeß," 73–85.

The decline of the counts' fortunes proved even more rapid than their ascent. Already in 1563, the wealthy corporations forced the Mittelort to foreclose on its administration of the mining industry. The Hinterort followed suit in 1565, accepting outside administration of its finances, which, at the insistence of the Albertine Saxons, came under the control of businessmen appointed to that task. But the Albertine elector, August of Saxony[102] dealt Mansfeld the decisive blow, which he aimed at the Vorderort in 1570, when he forced its counts to accept the *Leipziger Sequestrationsabschied*. This legal agreement, described in detail in chapter four, forced the Vorderort counts to surrender their three-fifths of the territory to their feudal lords, the electors of Saxony, the administrators of the archdiocese of Magdeburg, and the administrators of the diocese of Halberstadt. The Vorderort's mining interests fell entirely to Albertine Saxony and the elector increasingly dominated the territory in the 1570s.

Conclusion

During the second half of the sixteenth century, Mansfeld fell into a period of political and economic decline. Political power and financial resources flowed out of the territory, and the counts became so heavily indebted that they were forced to battle for their own survival. Each dynastic line developed a different strategy of alliances in an attempt to weather the storm. Most often this meant looking to traditional allies, the Albertine Saxons for the Vorderort and, because Ernestine Saxony was so weakened by the Schmalkald War, a more independent path for the Hinterort and Mittelort. The small entrepreneurs who had made fortunes in mining during the first half of the sixteenth century must have felt their influence waning, along with their wealth, as increasingly control of the mining industry moved to the counts and thereafter, the creditors and feudal lords. The pastorate remained the one stable group in the territory, having retained its conservative Lutheran positions throughout the theological controversies of the mid-century. It was among them that the controversy over original sin would erupt.

[102] August was the brother of Moritz and ruled Albertine Saxony as elector from 1553 until 1584.

CHAPTER TWO

COMPETING VIEWS OF ORIGINAL SIN AND ASSOCIATED ARGUMENTS AND MEANINGS

The dispute over the definition of original sin, or more precisely, Matthias Flacius Illyricus's[1] controversial explanation of this doctrine, originated at the University of Jena in 1560 among the highest levels of the Lutheran academic world. It did not enter the territory of Mansfeld until a decade later. There it first claimed the attention of those clerics who operated in intellectual circles that went beyond the territory's borders. But divisions within this ecclesiastical leadership soon spread throughout the territory's entire pastorate.

It may seem strange to begin a discussion of lay religiosity with elite theologians debating abstract points of doctrine in ivory towers. But in order to understand why the laity of Mansfeld became deeply involved in the controversy, it is important to start at the beginning with the central intellectual premise, and work outward to the various meanings and connotations it came to encompass. Only then can the laity's association with one side or the other begin to make sense. The assumption here is that a purely intellectual weighing of the validity of the two definitions of original sin was not the only aspect of the debate

[1] Matthias Flacius Illyricus (1520–1575) was born in Croatia, but studied in Venice, Basel, and Tübingen, before matriculating in Wittenberg in 1541. He eventually became a professor of Hebrew there, where he was influenced by both Luther and Melanchthon, the former particularly with regard to pastoral care, the latter with regard to theology. After Emperor Charles V's defeat of the Lutheran princes in the Schmalkald War (1547), as Melanchthon was urging a conciliatory policy, Flacius took up the banner of complete resistance. He left Wittenberg for the still unconquered Magdeburg, where he took part in the efforts there to resist the re-imposition of any and all aspects of the Roman religion. During this period he was involved in the composition of the Protestant church history referred to as the *Magdeburg Centuries* and played a key role in the establishment of a Lutheran hermeneutical tradition. He quickly became famous for his polemics against the Philippists, the followers of Melanchthon, who more than once successfully employed political forces to expel Flacius from various posts. For his views on original sin, however, he was not only condemned by the Philippists, but by the majority of members of his own party, the Gnesio-Lutherans. For more on Flacius see Oliver K. Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther's Reform* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2002); and Wilhelm Preger, *Matthias Flacius Illyricus und seine Zeit*, 2 vols. (Erlangen: 1859–1861).

that piqued lay interest. For already with Flacius, a group of arguments and premises attached themselves to his definition, the origin and identity of which are the subject of the first part of this chapter.

But Flacius never spoke a word to the laity of Mansfeld, rather the pastorate there acted as intermediaries between the academy and the parish. What did they take from Flacius? How did they translate his views into more accessible language? What did they emphasize, add, subtract, and modify? Answers to such questions are essential for gauging the level of understanding the laity achieved regarding this complex doctrine and will also be addressed in this chapter.

Matthias Flacius Illyricus on Original Sin

Matthias Flacius Illyricus composed his most complete explanation of original sin in 1567 as a part of his comprehensive work of theology entitled *Clavis scripturae sacrae*.[2] His decision to address original sin was in response to a notion that, he claimed, was widespread among Lutheran theologians, namely that original sin was an *accident*, something non-essential to human nature, merely attached to it. Flacius asserted that such theologians often used the following analogy to exemplify their reckless and frivolous understanding of original sin: prior to the fall into sin, human nature was like a magnet, its capacity for free will like the magnet's power to attract iron. When rubbed with garlic, the magnet's powers were nullified, just as when corrupted by original sin, the human being's free will no longer functioned properly. But goat's blood would reverse the effects of the garlic, allowing the magnet to resume it natural functions. The point was that the magnet never lost its inherent ability to attract iron, rather external materials defused its powers. So the human will, even after the fall into sin remained intact, its powers merely neutralized. Moreover, both the garlic and original sin were accidents, non-essential to the substance of

[2] Matthias Flacius Illyricus, "Tractatus VI, De Peccati originalis aut veteris Adami appellationibus et essentia," in *Clavis Scripturae, seu de Sermone Sacrarum literarum, plurimas generales Regulas continens. Altera Pars. Authore Matthia Flacio Illyrico Albonese. Huius Operis multiplicem necessariumque usum ac rationem, Lector, ex Praefatione intelliges. Accessit quoque Rerum & verborum toto Opera praecipue memorabilium Index*. (Basil: 1581 [Basil 1567]), 368–382 [479–498]. I am heavily indebted to Preger in the following explanation of Flacius' position on original sin. *Matthias Flacius Illyricus und seine Zeit*, 2:310–321.

the magnet and human nature, incapable of transforming them substantially. Flacius' problem with this view was that when followed to its logical conclusion, if the accident of original sin was wiped away, man would return to the status of Adam before the fall into sin, with the result that "He will, therefore, need no resurrection from the dead, regeneration, and the creation of a new heart in order to be restored as a new creature. Rather he will exercise his innate powers as prior to the fall [into sin] and he will do so happily."[3] For Flacius, such a position significantly overestimated humankind's powers, while minimizing the role of Christ in salvation.

On the contrary, argued Flacius, humankind had not only been substantially transformed by original sin, but original sin *had become* the corrupted substance of postlapsarian man, or put another way, had become human nature. For, argued Flacius, "there is nothing in man distinct from that evil mind or heart of stone that destroys him spiritually, as sickness kills him bodily. Rather, it is all his ruined and devastated nature."[4] Nor was original sin merely something attached or added from the outside "as if someone poured or injected poison or some other evil, so that due to the infused evil, what remained became itself harmful. But it is as if someone transmuted the same good liquid or food, so that by its own means it became evil and poisonous or simply poison itself."[5] Thus for Flacius, original sin was not something external to human nature that remained distinct when it entered the body. Rather, humankind's substance itself had experienced an essential transformation from inside through a process not unlike putrefaction or fermentation. This did not mean, however, that the two concepts, original sin and the human nature/substance, were interchangeable. For Flacius it was more complicated than that.

Flacius believed that the substance of humankind, prior to the fall into sin, was divided into two parts: the material substance (*substantia materialis*) and the formal substance (*substantia formalis*). The material

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[3] "Non ergo indigebit resuscitatione ex mortuis, regeneratione, creatione novi cordis et ut in novam creaturam condatur, sed illa prima suas nativas vires exercet et feliciter exercebit." Flacius, *Clavis Scripturae*, 376.

[4] "Non est in homine aliquid diversum ab ipsa mala mente aus lapideo corde, quod eum spiritualiter destruat, sicut morbus eum corporaliter conficit, sed est tantum ipsa perditissima et jam destructissima natura." Flacius, *Clavis Scripturae*, 380.

[5] "…sicut si quis in bonum liquorem venenum aut aliquid aliquod malum injiciat aut infundat, ut propter illud affusum malum etiam reliquum sit noxium, sed ita, sicut si quis ipsum bonum liquorem aut cibum invertat, ut illud per se jam malum ac venenatum aut potius venenum sit." Flacius, *Clavis Scripturae*, 380.

substance remained intact after the fall into sin, and was in and of itself neither good nor evil, but neutral. Within the formal substance, he further distinguished two levels, the "substantial form" and the "substantial form in its highest grade" (*substantia formalis in summo gradu*). To the lower part of the formal substance (the "substantial form") belonged the distinction between body and soul, sensory perception, and the ability to think. To the higher part of the substantial form in prelapsarian humankind belonged reason and will, along with their corresponding divine characteristics[6] for, he claimed, "free will is the reason (*intellectus*) and will of man as far as it applies to religion and the mandates of God."[7] What is more, free will as it was originally created, "was the most fundamental part of the image of God and the cause of all good."[8] Because this higher grade of formal substance originally gave humankind its true character, it was the measure by which theology judged the essence of man, that is, the health or sickness of the formal substance in its highest grade was, theologically speaking, an accurate assessment of humankind's overall status. "Theology," stated Flacius, "contemplates and considers primarily and even solely this *substantia formalis* and from it judges man."[9]

Transformed into its evil opposite, it is precisely this component of humankind's substance that had been most deeply affected by the fall into sin.

> The formal substance of man was originally the image of God, and, due to this substance, he was also a son of God. But now, on the contrary, [the formal substance] is the image of Satan, and, due to this substance, [man] is now a son of Satan. Therefore, just as sons of Satan, even in their very appearance, are distinguished from angels of light, so also the sons of God [are distinguished] from the Devil's sons.[10]

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[6] "sed loquor de ea noblissima substantiali forma, ad quam praecipue ipsum cor aut potius anima rationalis formata erat, ita ut ipsa sua essentia Dei imago eumque repraesentaret, utque suae substantiales potentiae intellectus ac voluntas affectusque ad Dei proprietates essent conformatae eumque tum repraesentarent, tum vere agnoscerent." Flacius, *Clavis Scripturae*, 370.

[7] "Liberum arbitrium es ipsemet intellectus ac voluntas hominis, quatenus circa religionem et mandata Dei versatur." Flacius, *Clavis Scripturae*, 373.

[8] "…fuit potissima pars imaginis Dei et causa omnis boni." Flacius, *Clavis Scripturae*, 373.

[9] "Hanc formam substantialem potissimum et hoc proprium respicit et considerat Theologia et ex eo eum censet." Flacius, *Clavis Scripturae*, 380.

[10] "Forma substantialis hominis, fuit initio imago Dei; qua etiam fuit filius Dei; & nunc contra est imago Satanae; qua etiam est filius ejus. Sicut igitur Satanae, jam

Simply put, the person, who had previously been a living image of God with regard to this highest form of his substance, was now a living image of Satan, as the most precious component of his substance (i.e. the image of God) had metamorphosed into is evil opposite. And this transformation was essential: one substance became another substance. Theologically speaking, argued Flacius, human nature and original sin could no longer be differentiated, just as the Devil could no longer be separated from the evil within him.[11] This new substance, which Flacius referred to as original sin, he asserted to be the true and only source of sin.[12]

Moreover, the inverted "substantial form in its highest grade" now governed and corrupted humankind's remaining powers. So although Flacius made a distinction between the seat of evil and those components of humankind's substance under its control, the necessary result, he insisted, was that one could properly speak of the human being as entirely corrupted. Just as the Devil had retained many of the excellent characteristics with which he had been created, but now used them to fight against God, so that they became "prejudiced weapons,"[13] so too with man's powers. Thus strictly speaking, all of humankind was not substantially original sin. But those components that were not had been so completely subjugated to the thralldom of original sin that the distinction was moot.

Noteworthy in this definition for our purposes is its inaccessibility to the laity. Flacius' use of fine philosophical distinctions and his careful divisions within the substance of humankind required a considerable understanding of philosophical terminology and reasoning; and the mere fact that he wrote in Latin precluded lay access to the work. Nor did Flacius ever attempt to make his views on original sin available to lay audiences. His was the stuff of academia, not of the street.

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specie ipsa differunt ab angelis lucis: sic etiam filii Dei, a filiis Diaboli." Flacius, *Clavis Scripturae,* 381.

[11] "Oppunt aliqui, oportere tamen distingui creaturam Dei a peccato, quod non est a Deo. Respondeo: Separato tu mihi jam diabolam a sua inharaente malicia.... Quomodo potest separari idem a se ipso?" Flacius, *Clavis Scripturae*, 379.

[12] "statuo esse verum et quasi unicum fontem omnis peccati et id ipsum quod vocamus originale peccatum." Flacius, *Clavis Scripturae*, 370.

[13] "Objiciunt aliqui: multa esse in homine adhuc bona et praestantia ex reliquiis creationis Dei. Respondeo: Etiam in diabolis sunt adhuc multae praestantes creationis dotes et quidem multo excellentiores quam in hoc carnali homine, sed tamen, quia omnes contra Deum militant, ideo sunt mala et mera peccata. Quid enim aliud sunt, quam injustitia armata?" Flacius, *Clavis Scripturae*, 380.

But Flacius also attached four ancillary or supporting arguments to his definition that would resonate more directly with the laity.

First, for Flacius, the purpose of his definition of original sin was to protect the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith alone, as is clear from the context in which he first articulated his views on original sin. In 1560, the distinguished Gnesio-Lutheran was a newly appointed professor at the University of Jena when he was invited to take part in a theological debate in the city of Weimar. His opponent, another university professor named Viktorin Strigel, was among the few theologians in Jena with Philippists tendencies, for most positions in the university and churches of Ernestine ducal Saxony were populated by Gnesio-Lutherans.[14] But by the late 1550s, support for Strigel was growing, a cause for concern among the Gnesio-Lutherans who were convinced that he was undermining the doctrine of justification by faith alone, part of a larger trend in the Lutheran world. In the years following Luther's death, various Protestant theologians had formulated positions that, from the perspective of the Gnesio-Lutherans, blunted or even overturned this central Reformation doctrine, so that they feared it was in danger of being lost altogether.[15] One of these "new positions" was a doctrine that the Gnesio-Lutherans derogatorily referred to as synergism, the view that humankind in some way contributed to its own salvation, not by good works in this case, but by the ability to assent to God's grace. Accused of harboring this doctrine, Strigel had been incarcerated in March 1559. As a condition of his release five months later, he was forced to agree to the disputation.

Flacius' stated goal in the debate was to counter Strigel's alleged synergism by demonstrating unequivocally that humankind in no way contributed to its own salvation. Already in the discussion of the first topic, namely the status of the will (was it free or unfree), the purpose or goal of Flacius' definition of original sin (still nascent at the time) became clear. In preparation for this part of the debate each opponent had composed a series of theses, in his third of which Flacius asserted the connection between original sin and the status of the will.

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[14] Although the doctrinal controversy over the definition of original sin would eventually split the Gnesio-Lutheran party, its origins are to be found in the wider debate between the Gnesio-Lutherans and the Philippists Lutherans.

[15] For an overview of the political and theological dangers posed to this doctrine after Luther's death, see Bodo Nischan, "Germany after 1550" in, *The Reformation World*, Andrew Pettegree, ed. (Routledge: London and New York, 2000), 387–409, esp. 387–391.

> The spiritual man is thoroughly corrupted by this leprosy [original sin] (as Luther is accustomed to call it). Not only has he lost all his powers of good…, but he has also acquired the converse antagonistic powers. For he is equipped with the worst inclinations and powers toward all evil and against God, especially in his highest faculties, which are the intellect, will, and disposition.[16]

For Flacius, original sin directly affected the status of the will by transforming humankind's most significant faculties (among them the will) into their opposites. Thus Flacius' description of original sin was intended to demonstrate its deleterious effect on the will, countering the synergists' claim that humankind could use the will to assent to its own salvation. During the course of the debate, Flacius repeatedly asserted the direct proportional relationship between the damage done by original sin and the status of the human will, "for to speak earnestly of original sin," he argued, "is to diminish human power. On the contrary, to enlarge human powers or free will is to diminish original sin."[17]

Strigel on the other hand was intent on demonstrating that the human being was not a block of wood or a stump merely acted upon according to the whim of God. He believed that humankind must in some way assent to or decline God's grace,[18] a position that had two advantages: it shielded God from accusations of injustice for arbitrarily deciding who to save, and it gave the human being some small agency

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[16] Homo spirituali hac lepra (ut Lutherus loqui solet) penitus corruptus, non tantum amisit omnes bonas vires,…sed & insuper contrarias & deterrimas acquisivit. Nam pessimis inclinationibus & viribus ad omne malum contra Deum, eius voluntatem ac religionem, es instructissimus, praesertim in supremis facultatibus: ut sunt, Intellectus, Voluntas, & Affectus." Simon Musaeus, ed. *Disputatio de originali peccato et libero arbitrio, inter Matthiam Flacium Illyricm, & Victorinum Strigelium, publice Vinariae per integram hebdomadam, praesentibus Illustriss. Saxoniae Principibus, Anno 1560. initio mensis Augusti, contra Papistrarum & Synergistarum corruptelas habita* (Eisleben: Urban Gaubisch 1563), 1.

[17] "Nam grandia dicere de originali peccato, est extenuate vires humanas. Contra vero amplificare vires humanas aut Liberum arbitrium, est extenuare peccatum originalis." Musaeus, ed. *Disputatio*, 21.

[18] Repeatedly during the debate he acknowledged this to be his goal. "De his proprietatibus loquor: Nunquam amplificavit celebravi vires humanas, sed nolo transformari in statuam vel in truncum." Musaeus, ed. *Disputatio*, 25. "Quare etsi agnosco de prevationem & ἀταείαγ, tamen ipsum liberum arbitrium voluntatem cum proprietatibus & modo agendi negare possum, nisi velim ex homine saxum, truncum vel beluam facere." Musaeus, ed. *Disputatio*, 29. "Ego concedo de homine non renato, non habente ulla initia conversionis. Tribuo initium conversiones, non vobis, de Deo, moventi & trahenti nos per verbum, sed hoc addo: Homo aliter trahitur quam truncos." Musaeus, ed. *Disputatio*, 37.

in his own salvation. For Strigel, the will remained capable of functioning freely to some extent, even after the fall into sin, so that the damage inflicted by original sin could not have been utter and complete, a position reflected already in his own theses. For although God affects the sinner's conversion, argued Strigel, the will must also assent, "for as long as the will opposes entirely, no conversion is possible."[19] For Strigel, then, conversion required three things, "the Holy Spirit moving hearts by his divine call; comprehension of that same voice of God either by hearing, reading, or pious meditation; and the will of man, which assents to some degree to the divine voice in fear."[20] Because the person must desire conversion, the will must be free to navigate. Although he did not mention original sin at this point, it stands to reason that Strigel did not consider its effects as devastating as Flacius did.

Many of the Gnesio-Lutherans saw the advantage of Flacius' definition of original sin. By accentuating its destructive nature, he negated any possibility that the human being might take part in conversion, forcing complete reliance upon God and thereby protecting Luther's doctrine of justification. But Flacius' views also raised many questions about other core Christian doctrines so that the main body of the Gnesio-Lutherans would reject it in the end. Nonetheless, for some of the laity in Mansfeld, Flacius' central objective would become an important and convincing consideration.

A second aspect of Flacius' explanation that would find substantial appeal among the people was his insistence that the clear words of Scripture and Luther's writings confirmed his views. When the Bible addressed humankind's status under original sin, argued Flacius, it used terminology that implied substance. Under the sway of original sin humankind was referred to as uncircumcised, stone, inverted, hard of heart, flesh, flesh and blood, the old man, the body of sin, of death. What is more, continued Flacius, the Scriptures said that Christ was made sin for the sinner.[21] If he became sin in humankind's place, clearly humankind must have been sin itself. Because such descriptions did not imply that sin's relationship to human nature was one of an

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[19] "Donec enim omnino repugnat voluntas, nulla potest fieri conversio." Musaeus, ed. *Disputatio*, 6.

[20] Spiritus Sanctus, movens corda per vocem diuinam: & ipsa vox Dei cogitata sive inter audiendum, sive in lectione, sive in pia meditatione: & voluntas hominis, quae voci divinae inter trepidationem utcunque assentitur." Musaeus, ed. *Disputatio*, 6.

[21] II Corinth. 5:21.

accident, a clear reading of Scripture required a definition that included the concept of substance.

And Luther had taught likewise, argued Flacius, for when he stated that original sin was not an accident, but the substance and essence of man himself, he meant that the entire nature and essence of man, indeed man himself, was sin.[22] Flacius offered three citations from Luther to support his position, words that would echo in the mouths and pour from the pens of some of the humblest citizens in the territory of Mansfeld:

> Luther, on the festival of the circumcision said:… This [original] sin is not committed, as all other sins, but it exists of itself, lives, and performs all sins. And it is substantial sin that lasts not for an hour or a long time, but as long as the human exists, it also continues sinning.
>
> Regarding Psalm 51: In fact, if you wish to define sin according to the psalm, you must say that sin is everything that is born from father and mother, even before man is old enough to speak, act, or think anything.
>
> Volume I, 29 of the Jena edition of Luther's works: Behold it is true that before you I am a sinner, that also sin is my nature, my original essence, and my conception, not to mention the word, deed, thought, and life that follows. I am an evil tree…and therefore as long as this same nature and essence remains in and on us, so long are we sinners, etc. until the body dies and goes under.[23]

To Flacius' mind, these passages proved that Luther considered original sin to be the substance of humankind.

In traditional academic style, Flacius employed authoritative texts in support of his position. Moreover, he emphasized repeatedly the

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[22] Here Flacius refers to, but does not cite, chapter three of Luther's Genesis commentary. *WA* 42:106–176.

[23] "Lutherus in festo circumcisionis inquit…. Hoc peccati non committitur, ut omnia alia peccata, sed per se existit, vivit ac facit omnia peccata: estque peccatum substantiale, quod non ad horam aut tempus aliquod, sed quamdiu homo est, ipsum quoque durat peccando etc.

Zu Ps. 51: Quin tu sic definias secundum hunc Psalmum: peccatum esse hoc totum, quod natum est ex patre et matre, antequam homo per aetatem aliquid possit dicere, facere aut cogitare.

Tom. I, 29 (d. Jen. Ausg.) Sihe so war ists, das ich für dir ein sünder bin, das auch sünd mein natur, mein anhebendes wesen, und mein empfengnuß ist, schweige dann die wort, werck und gedanken, und nachfolgendt leben. Ein böser baum bin ich…und darumb so lang als dieselb natur und wesen in und an uns etc., bleibet, also lang sind wir sünder etc, biß das der leichnam sterbe und undergehe." Flacius, *Clavis Scripturae*, 371–372. *WA* 10/1/1:509; *WA* 40/2:322; *WA* 18:501. For the Mansfeld clergy's use of these passages, see [73]. For the Mansfeld laity's use of these passages, see [236].

clarity of these texts, arguing that a straightforward reading of them absolutely required the conclusions to which he had come. And although he never made the argument, embedded in this contention was the implication that if one believed that the words of Scripture and the writings of Luther were clear and truthful, then to argue that humankind was not substantially transformed by original sin was to argue against the lucidity of Scripture itself. Thus the conflict over original sin had the potential to become a referendum on the clarity of Scripture and, from the perspective of all Lutherans, Scripture's great interpreter, Martin Luther. Among some of the laity in Mansfeld, it would.

A third line of argumentation that would find some traction among the Mansfeld laity was that of clear reason. Logic dictated, asserted Flacius, that a substance corrupted remained a substance, albeit one different from the first.

> If it is a corruption of the substance itself, it is well known that each corruption of one thing is the generation of another, with an altered substantial form, but with the material remaining. For just as that which was corrupted was a substance, so that which is generated through the corruption is also a new substance.[24]

Reason required that the corruption of one substance did not merely change the accidental nature of that substance, but transformed it into a new substance. The analogy Flacius liked to use was the transformation of wine into vinegar: the corruption of the former resulted in the generation of the latter, but vinegar was not merely corrupted wine, it was its own discrete substance. Such appeals to reason would strike some of the laity of Mansfeld as straightforward and comprehensible.

A final aspect of Flacius' argument, closely related to the last, was his insistence that the logic of Scripture differed from that of philosophy, and consequently, that the language he used in a theological sense differed in its meaning from the same language used in a philosophical setting. Already at Weimar he noted that he was attempting to approximate the way Scripture and Luther spoke about original sin, an effort that required a reconceptualization of philosophical terms into theological

[24] "Si est corruptio substantiae ipsius, notissimum est, quod omnis corruptio unius est generatio alterius, mutata forma substantiali, sed manente materia. Sicut enim id quod corrumpitur, fuit substantia: ita id quod generatur per eam corruptionem est nova substantia." Flacius, *Clavis Scripturae*, 375.

terms. For this reason, he often repeated the phrase, "theologically speaking" to indicate that although his terminology originated in the discipline of philosophy, it did not have the same meaning or logic. Vilifying the use of human reason in the practice of defining doctrine, Flacius insisted that Scripture and Luther should be allowed to speak in their own terms. Thus when Strigel employed the term "accident" to describe humankind's righteousness prior to the fall into sin, Flacius censured him for his use of philosophical terms and reasoning. By contrast, he himself would use Scripture alone:

> You assert that original righteousness was an accident. Look how you do violence to the doctrines of our church. Not only do you ignore the views of Luther and follow the sophists, but you blithely circumvent all the testimonies of Scripture. But I will confirm my conscience and divine truth, not according to Donatus or from philosophy, but from the words of God.[25]

Although Flacius himself would eventually employ words like substance to describe human nature under the control of original sin, and make elaborate divisions within the composition of humankind, he believed that this position was necessitated by the Scriptures and Luther, predicated on logic that was theological, not philosophical. Moreover, he argued, he used such language merely to describe what he saw in Scripture. On the other hand, he insisted that Strigel argued from philosophical grounds, bending Scripture to support them.[26] So when Flacius spoke about human nature as substantially original sin, he would not have claimed that his use of such reasoning applied generally to other objects in the natural world, but was specific to this topic.

If we pause for a moment to consider Luther's understanding of original sin in relationship to Flacius', one more issue that would have some bearing on the situation in Mansfeld comes to light. Flacius' argument

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[25] "Iusticiam originalem esse accidens, asseris. Vide quantum pecces in doctrinam nostrarum Ecclesiarum, quo non tantum negligas sententiam Lutheri, & sequaris Sophistarum: sed etiam potes bona conscientia transilire omnia testimonia Scripturae. Non ex Donato, aut ex Philosophia, sed ex verbo Dei conscientiam meam & veritatem coelestem confirmabis." Musaeus, ed. *Disputatio*, 53.

[26] Modern scholars agree that the issue was ultimately a question of terminology. See Lauri Haikola, *Gesetz und Evangelium bei Matthias Flacius Illyricus. Eine Untersuchung zur lutherischen Theologie vor der Kondordienformel* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1952), 164; Robert C. Schultz quotes Haikola, agreeing with her in his article, "Original Sin: Accident or Substance: The Paradoxical Significane of FC I, 53–62," in Lewis Spitz and Wenzel Lohff, eds. *Discord, Dialogue, and Concord: Studies in the Lutheran Reformation's Formula of Concord* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 38–57.

was both part of and in response to a wider effort by Protestant theologians of the second half of the sixteenth century to delineate Lutheran theology more precisely, a process that many contemporaries felt obscured the original intent of the Reformer as much as it clarified it. When Luther addressed the issue of original sin, most often he spoke in terms of its impact on the relationship between God and humanity, not on its effect on substance humanity and the quality of that substance. As such, he argue that original sin absolutely and completely destroyed this relationship without defining with any precision what that meant for the composition of human nature, and without employing academic language of quantifying and qualifying common during the late medieval and early modern period. Because the language of broken relationships was not the language of the academy, already prior to Luther's death the tendency in Protestant circles had been to "translate" his theology back into an academic conceptual framework. Only then could it be held up, considered, and most importantly, differentiated from the positions of Catholic and other Protestant groups, for only then was it in a language understandable to all. But in this process, the connotations, quantifications, and logical associations of the terminology accompanied the description, modifying Luther's original theology considerably in the minds of many.

Flacius, and even more so his clerical supporters in the territory of Mansfeld, felt that something of Luther was being lost in this process. Their efforts were in part an attempt to break this trend, to retain a theological discourse in line with Luther's and what they saw as the clear meaning of Scripture. Neither the Flacian clerics of Mansfeld, nor their lay supporters in the territory seemed to understand fully the process taking place. But they did notice that something of Luther was being lost, and more often than not they put it down to the language that was being used: Luther simply did not talk like that was their assertion. As such, the controversy over original sin represented a larger issue, namely the legacy of Luther, an issue not unimportant for the laity of Mansfeld who counted among their number close relatives of the Reformer.

From this brief overview of Flacius' position on original sin it is clear that already the issue was a multifaceted bundle of ideas. In addition to its central intellectual premise, it provided a means to protect the fundamental Reformation doctrine of justification by faith alone, the notion that the Scriptures were clear, that logic must prevail in their interpretation, and that the way in which Luther spoke about

theological issues needed to be retained. As noted, the laity in Mansfeld would respond to various aspects of this bundle of ideas with assorted degrees of interest and enthusiasm. But the ideas did not proceed directly from Flacius to the Mansfeld laity, they came through the filter of the Mansfeld clergy. To truly understand what moved the laymen and -women of Mansfeld then, requires an examination of the reaction of their pastors and teachers to the debate over original sin.

Schism among the Mansfeld Pastorate

Following Flacius' 1567 publication of the *Clavis Scripturae*, friends within the Gnesio-Lutheran party who had previously applauded began to grasp the broader implications of his position. The danger inherent in his assertion that human nature, after the fall, could be defined as original sin gradually became clear, for it raised the possibility that "sin was a substance," the mantra of the Manichaeans, fourth century dualistic heretics who had posited the existence of both a good and an evil God, each with the power to create, locked in eternal combat with one another. The result of this and other implications, discussed below, was a division within the Gnesio-Lutheran party, a rift eventually so complete that Flacius, the leading intellect in this group, was forced into exile and died a disgraced man in 1575.

However, in the years between the Weimar Colloquium (1560) and the publication of the *Clavis Scripturae* (1567), the full implications of his views were clear neither to Flacius nor his supporters among the Gnesio-Lutherans, who included some of the leading churchmen in the territory of Mansfeld. In fact, so impressed were the Mansfelders with his performance at Weimar that they published an edition of the proceedings in Eisleben in 1563.[27] In the past, their common Gnesio-Lutheran outlook had kept the pastors of Mansfeld unified, and until the early 1570s, they stood together firmly behind Flacius' view of original sin. But in 1570 and 1571, cracks began to appear in their front, followed by a full-scale rift in 1572, with Cyriakus Spangenberg, the dean in Tal Mansfeld, court preacher in the fortress of Mansfeld, and passionate polemicist in the defense of a conservative interpretation of Luther's writings remaining loyal to the Flacian view.[28] Among the

[27] Musaeus, ed. *Disputatio*.

[28] It is noteworthy that in his approach to the theological debates of the period he made a conscious effort to model himself on Luther, which meant that he was quick

territory's clergy, he was the first to side publicly with Flacius[29] and during the course of the debate, approximately one third of the territory's pastorate, referred to as the Mansfelders, would follow his lead. Their opponents, Hieronymus Mencel and the other the Eislebeners, comprised the remaining two-thirds of the territory's pastorate, although many of these individuals never involved themselves directly in the debate.

By 1571, some of the territory's clergy had recognized problems with Flacius' position, arguing instead for a definition that excluded the words "substance" and "accident" altogether.[30] In July of that year, the Ernestine duke of Saxony-Weimar, John William, invited Mencel and Spangenberg to a colloquium in Weimar in an attempt to mend the relationship between the Mansfeld clergy (particularly the vocal

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to defend vigorously Protestant doctrine wherever, from his perspective, he saw it disregarded or distorted. From the moment he first laid eyes on Luther, the 14-year old Spangenberg had been impressed by the reformer's fighting spirit (and physical girth). Thinking back on this encounter years later, he described his reaction as follows: "Wenn ich D. Luther, seligen Gedächtniß, vor drei und zwanzig Jahren zu Wittenberg etwan gehen sah, da dünkte mich gleich, als sähe ich also ein groß gewaltig, wohlgerüstet Streitschiff, das unter die Feinde auf dem ungestümen Meere dieser Welt unter die Papisten, Juden, Schwärmer und Rottengeister gestrost und unverzaget hineinsetzet, Alles verjagt und erlegt und mit fröhlichem Triumpf den Sieg herwieder brächt, denn durch den Glauben an Jesum Christum hat dieser heilige Mann alle seine Widersacher überwunden und ist also ihr Obermann geworden." Spangenberg, *Der Ander Theil/ der Citharae Lutheri. Auflegung der schönen Psalmen Davids/ so der Selige Mann/ Doctor Martin Luther/ in Gesangeweise bracht* (Erfurt: Georgius Bawman, [1569] 1571), 83–84.

[29] Already in his introduction to a 1569 compliation of sermons on Luther's hymns, *Cithara Lutheri*, Spangenberg openly addressed the issue of original sin. Later that year, he preached on the hymn, *Durch Adams Fall ist gantz Verderbt*, a hymn that addresses the fall into sin, including the sermon as an appendix in the compilation. In 1571, he published the sermon again, this time separately under the title *Deutliche und nützliche erklerung der Lere von der Erbsünde/ Kurtze Bekentnus H. Fl. Illyrici/ wider etliche falsche Aufflagen* (Jena: Rödinger, 1571). Also in that year he published a more extensive treatise on the issue of original sin, entitled *Kurtzer Bericht für die einfeltigen/ von dem itzigen Streit/ uber der Lere von der Erbsünde, etc.* (Jena: Rödinger, 1571).

[30] On July 4, 1571, Mencel presented Spangenberg with a definition of original sin in which he argued against the use of both words, *accident* and *substance*—the same short statement that he would offer as the territory's official position a few weeks later at the Weimar Colloquium. Spangenberg responded that both words were unnecessary, but felt compelled to differentiate the degree to which each word was problematic. *Accident*, he said, was definitely impermissible, as Luther had already clearly condemned it. *Substance*, on the other hand, in the way in which Flacius meant it, was not wrong, even if it was unnecessary and could be confusing. Cyriakus Spangenberg, *Historia: Warhafftige erzelung aller Geschichten/ wie/ wenn und warüber sich die Trennung unter den Predigern in der Graveschafft Mansfelt zugetragen* (Mansfeld: Andreas Petri, 1573), 16–17.

Spangenberg) and other supporters of Flacius on the one side, and the Gnesio-Lutheran party at the University of Jena on the other.[31] There Mencel read a statement on original sin approved by the Mansfeld pastorate in which he argued that Luther himself had spoken in terms that indicated that original sin was a substance, although the Reformer had not used the word.[32] "Because we believe and maintain that Mr. Illyricus," continued Mencel, "means nothing other than the definition we just defended when he says, *Peccatum est Substantia*, we are neither desirous of, nor would it be right to condemn him for these words, or to consider him a Manichaean."[33] But Mencel also distanced himself from the language of sin as substance by adding "that [Flacius] did indeed use such words, but for that we will let him be responsible and not allow ourselves to be drawn into a debate over them."[34]

Although Mencel did not use Flacius' most controversial wording, the superintendent supported the Flacian position in an attempt to find

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[31] See Eduard Schmid, "Des Flacius Erbsuende-Streit: Historisch-Literarisch Dargestellt," in *Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie* 19 (1849): 3–78; 218–79, here at 218–23.

[32] "Wir Prediger in der Graffschafft Mansfeld/ haben durch Gottes gnaden gehalten/ gegleubt/ geleret/ und bekennet/ und halten/ gleuben/ leren/ und bekennen noch also/ Was vom Fleisch geboren ist/ das ist Fleisch/ Johan. 3. das ist/ Der Mensch/ wie er von Vater und Mutter geboren ist/ mit seiner gantzen Natur und Wesen/ ist nicht allein ein Sünder/ sondern auch die Sünde selbst/ nach der auslegung Doctor Luthers/ Tom. 1/ Jen. fol. 29. Sihe/ so war ist es das Ich für dir ein Sünder bin/ das auch Sünde meine Nature/ mein anhebendens Wesen/ meine empfengnis ist/ Psal. 51. Dahin verstehen wir auch Doctor Luthers reden/ da er die Erbsünde nennet Personsünde/ Natursünde/ und wesentliche Sünde/ wo die nicht were/ so were auch kein wirkliche Sünde/ diese Sünde wird auch nicht gethan/ wie alle andere Sünde/ sondern sie ist/ sie lebt/ und thut alle Sünde/ und ist die wesenliche Sünde. Item/ Im dritten Teil der Kirchenpostilla/ uber das Evangelion am Newen Jars tage/ Das treibet die Schrifft in allen Exempeln und Leren/ durch und durch/ Unser Sünde in uns ist nicht ein werck oder that/ sondern ist die Natur und gantzes Wesen/ etc. Hieronymus Mencel, *M. Hieronymi Mencelii/ Mansfeldischen Superintendenten Erklerung/ Der Weimarischen Bekentnis halben. Und von M. Cyr: Spangb: Irenei/ Sarcerii/ und andere bestendigkeit. Zum Bericht Wie sie zuvor von dem unterschied zwischen der Menschlichen Natur/ und irer verderbung/ welchen sie jetzt verdammen/ gehalten/ und geschrieben haben. Auch M Andreae Fabricii/ des Heiligen Teufels halben* (Eisleben: Urban Gaubisch, c. 1573), 4–6.

[33] "Weil wir nu gleuben und dafür halten/ das der Herr Illyricus mit seiner rede/ *Peccatum est Substantia*, keine andere meinung/ denn wie jetzt gesetzt verteidigen wolle/ so haben wir In auch bisher umb solcher wort willen/ nicht wollen noch können verdammen/ noch für einen Manicheer halten." Mencel, *M. Hieronymi Mencelii/ Mansfeldischen Superintendenten Erklerung*, 6.

[34] "Das er aber solche wort gebrauchet/ das lassen wir in verantworten/ und wissen uns desselben halben mit niemand in Disputation einzulassen." Mencel, *M. Hieronymi Mencelii/ Mansfeldischen Superintendenten Erklerung*, 6.

middle ground between the factions inside and outside the territory.[35] During the colloquium, however, Spangenberg defended Flacius more vigorously than Mencel, insisting that Luther and his contemporaries had spoken like Flacius about original sin. The Jena professor Johan Wigand forcefully opposed Spangenberg, and when the colloquium failed to achieve unity, Wigand quickly drafted a statement articulating the Jena professors' position on original sin, a copy of which he sent to Mencel.[36]

When Wigand's book arrived in Mansfeld four weeks later, it was accompanied by a request from the duke of Saxony that the Mansfeld pastorate assess it. To accomplish this task, each pastor in the territory received a copy and was asked for his reaction, a process Mencel later described: "I, the superintendent, encouraged and requested [the pastors] to write their thoughts on Wigand's book, whether it was in line with God's word or not," a procedure, the superintendent noted, that had worked well during other doctrinal disputes in the past.[37] The majority of the pastors in Eisleben, with Mencel in the lead, responded

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[35] Years later, when under attack from the Mansfelders, Mencel described the situation under which he first proposed this confession. It was, he insisted, an attempt to find a middle ground. "Mein gedancken und wissen/ war dieselbe zeit/ das ich neben M. Spangenberg erfordert were/ Rath zu geben/ wie man ein Mündlich Gespreche zwischen den Theologen zu Jena/ und Illyrico anstellen und halten möchte. Umb welches (wie die wort in der Bekentnis mitbringen) wir Illyrici halben gar vleissig gebeten haben. Weil es aber darzu nicht bracht werden kondte/ und von Spangenberg und mir/ das wir mit jtzt genenten Jenischen Theologen/ uns freundlich von der Erbsünde unterreden solten/ endlich nach vielem abschlahen/ erhalten wird/ Habe ich/ wie gemeldet/ diese kurtze Summa gefasset/ Nicht andern darmit furzuschreiben/ oder jemand daran zuverpflichten/ Sondern zum gedecthnis das ich in bereitschafft hette/ die wort/ mit welchem kürtzlich von diesem hohen Artickel/ in freundlicher Collation geredet/ und unsere meinung dargethan werden könte." Mencel, *M. Hieronymi Mencelii/ Mansfeldischen Superintendenten Erklerung*, 7–8.

[36] Johann Wigand, *Von der Erbsünde Lere aus Gottes Wort, aus dem Düringischen Corpore doctrinä und aus D. Luth. Büchern. Und Unterricht von etlichen gegenwertig Streiten* (Jena, Donatus Richtzenhan, 1571). Wigand's book was 171 pages long. See especially part 3, "Von der Rede. Die Erbsünde ist ein Accidens im Menschen." It is noteworthy that Johann Wigand (1523–1587) was born in Tal Mansfeld and maintained contacts there throughout the controversy. Spangenberg writes, "Den 15. Junii hat Doctor Wigandus/ and einen seinen Schwager/ zu Mansfelt wonhafftig/ geschrieben/ und in gewarnet/ das er sich Spangenberg und seinen Caplan/ nicht wolte in der lere von der Erbsünde irre machen lassen." Spangenberg, *Historia*, 59. For more on Wigand see chapter one, n. [91].

[37] "Sie sind von mir, als Irem Superintendenten ermanet und gebeten werden, das sie uf Wigandi Buch Ir bedenken anzeigen wolten, wie sie es finden, ob es Gottes Wort gemessen sei, oder nicht." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 202, fol. 37r–37v. This is from an undated letter of Mencel to one of the counts.

positively to the book,[38] while Spangenberg and his clerical colleagues in Tal Mansfeld reacted negatively to it.[39]

To isolate the precise issue upon which the two factions in the territory diverged requires a close analysis of the Eisleben colloquium of 1572, a last-ditch effort by the Mansfeld clergy to reach agreement.[40] According to the plan of the colloquium, the Eislebeners proposed a definition of original sin that served as the point of departure, the kernel of which was a word-for-word citation from the Schmalkald Articles. Original sin was "…a corruption of nature so deep and horrible that no reason can understand it, but it must be believed from the revelation of the Scriptures."[41] Holy Writ illustrated original sin and its fruits, continued the Eislebeners, by means of the Law, which served as a mirror, demonstrating to humankind its status after the fall. To this definition they added a paragraph describing the effects of original sin, namely "the complete inability, imperfection, and failure to adhere to and fulfill the law. By it, the person is corrupted, confused, poisoned, and twisted in his entire nature and essence, with all his powers, strength, and operations…."[42] The result was that humankind had entirely lost the original image of God, which had been transformed

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[38] From Spangenberg's perspective, Mencel had already changed his mind about the confession he had given in Weimar prior to the arrival of Wigand's book. Spangenberg says that at a wedding reception on August 21, 1571, the two men had spoken and Mencel had said he could no longer adhere to his earlier position. Spangenberg, *Historia*, 21.

[39] Indeed, Wigand later called his book "a claw in Spangenberg's sore," as he believed that it excited Spangenberg into a rage. "Is igitur liber Spangebergio erat unguis in ulcere, quod dicitur, eamque ob causam totus ira exardescit, omnes venas, quas habet, inflat." Johann Wigand, *De Manichaeismo Renovato* (Leipzig: Henningus Grosius, 1587), 405.

[40] The notes from this colloquium can be found in Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a II, No. 521, entitled *Religionsgespräch in der Grafschaft Mansfeld, 1572*. In 1577, writing in retrospect, Spangenberg claimed that this colloquium was suggested by the Eislebeners as trickery, as the kiss of Judas. Cyriakus Spangenberg, *Von den Censuren So die Eißleber Anno 1572. wider M. Spangenbergen außbracht/ und Anno 1577. habe drucken lassen/ uber dem Streit von der Erbsunde* (n.p., 1577), 14.

[41] "Solche Erbsünde ist so gar eine tiefe, böse Verderbung der Natur, daß sie keine Vernunft nicht kennt, sondern muß aus der Schrift Offenbarung geglaubt werden." Smalkald Articles, Part 3, I. Von der Sünde. In the Colloquium this is rendered, "[Es] eine tieffe, grundtlose, bose, Verderbung ist der Natur, das sie Kein Vernunft nicht kennen, sondern mus aus der Schrift offenbarunge gegleubt werden." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a II, No. 521, fol. 1v.

[42] "…ein gentzliches unvermögen, unvolkomenheit, und mangel, das gesetze zuhalten zuerfullen, dardurch der Mensch mit seiner ganzen Natur und Wesen, mit aller Kraft, macht, und wirkunge, durch und durch verdorben, verruckt, vergifftet, und verkehret…. worden." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a II, No. 521, fol. 2r.

into the image of the Devil. Concisely stated, the Eislebeners defined original sin as "an unfathomable corruption of human nature" that rendered humankind incapable of fulfilling the law.

Spangenberg later reported, "I concurred that the definition, as it was read, did not at all disagree with Luther, but in light of the present controversy, and furthermore, for the sake of future generations, the definition had to be sharpened a little bit with Dr. Luther's own words."[43] He and the Mansfelders then offered their own version: "We believe, teach, and confess… that original sin is actually the guilt from Adam's Fall and the corrupted nature."[44] Evidence for their position rested on what they referred to as "the rule of St. John" which stated that "sin, as a whole, is unrighteousness, that is, everything incongruous with God's command. And sin is the corrupted nature and everything that we think or do that is against God's command."[45] Thus sin is unrighteousness, a term that includes not only evil thoughts and deeds, but also the corrupt nature of humankind itself. Surprisingly, the Mansfelders' description of the effects of original sin was a word-for-word quotation from their opponent's definition. But the Mansfelders added one component to their definition not found in the Eislebeners' description, a direct quotation from Luther's Church Postil for New Year's Day, which Flacius had used and Mencel had employed in his definition in Weimar: "and in addition, this original sin is not committed like all other sins, rather it *is*, it lives and does all other sins and is the essential sin."[46] Concisely stated, Spangenberg and the Mansfelders defined original sin *as* the corrupted human nature, with the result that humankind was rendered unable to fulfill the law.

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[43] "…Ich angezeigt/ das die gelesene Definition/ mit der Schriftt und Luthero nicht streitig/ aber von wegen fürstehendes streites/ und dessen/ was sich noch kunfftig zu tragen möchte/ ein wenig/ doch mit Doctor Luthers worten/ gescherfft werden muste." Cyriakus Spangenberg, *Historia*, 77.

[44] "Wir glauben, Lheren, und bekhennen…das die Erbsunde eigentlichen seye die Schult von Adams fall, und die verterbte Natur." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a II, No. 521, fol. 14v–15r.

[45] "Sünde in gemein ist das unrechte, das ist, alles was dem Gesetz Gottes nicht ähnlich, sondern wider Gottes geboth ist. Und also Sünde ist die vertorbene Natur und alles was wir gedenken und thun, das wider Gottes gebott ist." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a II, No. 521, fol. 15r.

[46] "Und demnach wirdt diese Erbsünde nicht gethan wie alle andere sünde, sondern sie sind, sie leben und thuet alle Sünde, und ist die wesentliche sünde…" Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a II, No. 521, fol. 15v; *WA* 10/1/1: 509.

The debate among the pastorate in Mansfeld, then, can be limited to the question of whether the meaning of the phrase "a corruption of nature" was synonymous with the meaning of the phrase "corrupted nature," the Mansfelders' position; or that between these two formulations, a distinction existed, the Eislebeners' position. Due to the centrality of this point, it is worth pausing to offer a more thorough example of the Mansfelders' reasoning for the conflation of these two phrases. In a letter to a fellow Gnesio-Lutheran two years prior to the colloquium, Spangenberg had addressed the issue, taking his point of departure from Luther's Genesis commentary, where the Reformer writes that "sin is of the substance of man" (*peccatum esse de substantia Hominis*). Denying the distinction between the statements, "sin is of the substance [of man]" (*peccatum est de substantia*) and "sin is the substance [of man]" (*peccatum est substantia*), Spangenberg insisted that Luther meant that the very essence of postlapsarian humankind is sin. Scripture, he argued, employed the two statements identically. For example, Adam said, "[Eve] is my flesh" (*Haec est Caro*) and a second time, "[Eve is] of my flesh" (*de Carne mea*). Moreover, God said, "Man is [made] of earth or clay" (*Homo est de terra* or *de luto*) and "Man is earth or clay" (*Homo est terra* or *Luto*).[47] Thus the phrases "corruption of nature" and "corrupt nature" denoted the same thing for Spangenberg.

In the discussion that followed, this was clearly the sticking point. Spangenberg and his allies believed that to leave the wording "corruption of human nature" allowed leeway for interpretation in two directions. It could mean either that original sin is corrupted human nature, as they believed, or that original sin is a separable corruption that had been mixed into human nature. Defining original sin *as* the corrupted nature would leave no doubt about interpretation. The Eislebeners, for their part, demanded a distinction between human nature and original sin, thereby creating an insurmountable obstacle to unity. But as with Flacius' original definition, various arguments attached themselves to the central issue of the debate, arguments that would give new meaning to the controversy and resonate among the laity in the coming decades.

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[47] Bruno Claußen, ed. "Cyriakus Spangenbergs Briefe an Johann von Hildesheim (1565–1570)," *Mansfelder Blätter*, 22 (1908): 155–224, here at 209. Cyriakus Spangenberg to Johann von Hildesheim, April 15, 1570. I have been unable to discover the Luther citation referred to by Spangenberg.

The Mansfelders' Position

In the subsequent conflict, the Mansfelders simplified Flacius' definition of original sin, but appropriated and significantly expanded the role of three of his associated arguments. Unlike Flacius, however, Spangenberg and the Mansfelders wrote in German, avoiding technical terminology. In their definition of original sin, they disregarded the fine distinctions within human nature as articulated by Flacius, instead delineating original sin with a simple syllogism: (major premise) sin is everything contrary to God's Law; (minor premise) the postlapsarian human being, prior to conversion, is completely contrary to God's law; (conclusion) the postlapsarian human being is sin itself. As the Eisleben Colloquium demonstrated, the Mansfelders took their point of departure from I John 3: 4, which defines sin as the transgression of the law, or as they translated it, "sin is unrighteousness,"[48] "for" they claimed, "St. John writes (I John 3), 'The sin is the unrighteousness,' that is, everything that is not righteous when measured against the righteous law of God, that is sin."[49]

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[48] "For sin is the transgression of the law." I John 3:4.

[49] "Denn S. Johannes schreibet 1 Joann: 3, Die Sünde ist das Unrecht, das ist, alles was nicht recht, noch dem Gerechten Gesetze Gottes Gemes ist, das ist Sünde." Cyriakus Spangenberg, *Bekentnus und Erbieten Magister Cyriaci Spangenberg den Artickel und der Lere von der Erbsunde Anlangendt* (Mansfeld: Andreas Petri, 1575), 8–9. This can also be found in manuscript form in: Dresden, Loc. 9756/13, fols. 200v–205r; and Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fols. 68r–78r. Almost every Mansfelder pamphlet devoted to original sin takes its point of departure from this verse. "So heisset solches Anerbtes böses/ verderbtes Wesen/ auch Sünde/ und eben die Erbsünde/ Denn alles was unrecht und dem Gesetze nicht gemes ist/ das ist auch Sünde/ I. Johan. 3." Pastors from Tal Mansfeld, Eisleben, and the countryside [the Mansfelders], *Zwo hochnotwendige Fragen/ An die Heilige Christliche Kirche/ uber der Lere von der Erbsünde/ Von etlicher Predigern zu Mansfeld/ Eisleben/ und auff dem Lande in der alte und löbliche Graffschafft Mansfeld/ gestellet* (Mansfeld: Andreas Petri, 1573), 7–8; "Nach Gottes Wort heisset Sünde/ alles das/ was wieder Gottes Gebot ist/ was nicht also ist/ stehet und gehet/ wie es nach Gottes Gesetze sein/ gehen und stehen solte. I Joan. 3 'Sünde ist das unrecht.'" Cyriakus Spangenberg, *Eine Predigte Von der Sünde und Vergebung der Sünden: Uber das Euange. am dritten Sontag Trinitatis, zu Eisleben in S. Peters Kirchen geschehen Anno 1573* (Mansfeld: Andreas Petri, 1573), 11; "Und daher halten wir die einfaltige/ kurtze/ klare und feine deutliche beschreibunge der Sünden/ die S. Johannes in seiner ersten Epistel am 3. Capitel setzet/ für gantz recht und gar gewis/ auch so volkomen/ das daran nichts zutadeln/ und darinnen weder zu wenig/ noch zuviel geredt wird/ da er sagt, 'Die Sünde ist das unrecht.'" Spangenberg, *Erklerung M. Cyriaci Spangenbergs*, 3; "Was ist Sünde? Sünde ist das Unrecht, 1. Johan 3. Das ist Alles was für Gott nicht recht, Sondern unrecht ist, das ist eitel Sünde, nach seines heiligen Gesetzes Urteil." Cyriakus Spangenberg, *Kinderlehre von der Erbsünde, Auß der heiligen schrifft, Lutheri Catechismo und Gesangebüchlin* (n.p, 1575), 8; "Nu lehret

Having once established the nature of sin, the Mansfelders turned their attention to the human being. The law accused man in his entirety, demonstrating that he was righteous neither in relation to God nor his neighbor. "Natural man," argued Spangenberg,

> as he is born into this world from his father and mother, with body and soul and all his reason, heart, mind and existence, will and desires, in all outward and inward powers . . . along with all his ponderings, thoughts, speech, deeds, and works . . . is before the face of God and his solemn court (without baptism and apart from Christ and grace) and according to the righteous judgment of the law, without virtue or validity; he is and has nothing good.[50]

Their definition of sin as it applied to humanity led them to the conclusion "that postlapsarian human nature and essence is flesh born of flesh, and in and of itself, is thoroughly sin and unrighteousness, and even the original sin itself."[51] Gone are Flacius' careful distinctions and academic terminology. Remaining is his final conclusion: human nature is original sin.

But like the professor, they employed related arguments to bolster their position, claiming first and foremost that their understanding of

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M. Spangenberg eben auch desselbige/ behelt Lutheri wort und meinunge/ Wie er die in seinen schriften gefunden/ und auß seinen heyligen Munde selbst gehöret hat. Bleibet bey der Schrifft welche lehret/ I. Joan. 3/ Das Sünde sey das unrecht/ Das ist/ Alles was dem Gesetze nicht gemeß." Emericus Sylvius, *Beweyß/ Das Magister Cyriakus Spangenberg und seine Mitbekenner inn der Lehre/ von der Erbsünde/ mit Luthero durchauß ubereinstimmen: Die Accidentzer aber Luthero stracks zuwider Lehren* (n.p., 1579), 3; "Ja wol/ 1 Johan. 3. stehet: Peccatum est Anomia, Sünde ist das unrecht, das ist, das jenige das dem Gesetz Gottes nicht gemes noch eben [ist]." Petrus Trewer, *Dialogus ein Gesprech: Zweyer Personen/ von dem jetztigen Streit/ uber der Erbsunde* (n.p., 1576), 6; "Was heisset denn Sünde in der heiligen Schrifft? Antwort: Sanct Johannes in der 1 Epistel am 3. sagt/ Sünde ist das unrecht/ das ist/ was wider Gottes gebot ist/ und mit dem Gesetzt Gottes nicht uber einkompt/ das alles heisset und ist Sunde." Johann Wincke, *Kurtze und einfaltige Fragen von der Erbsunden: Den Kindern im Thal Mansfeldt des vergangenen Jars fürgelegt. Mit einer kurtzen vorrede M. Cyriaci Spangenbergs* (Mansfeld: n.p., 1573), 20.

[50] ". . . der Naturlich Mensche wie er vom Vater und Mutter zu dieser weldt geborne wird mit leib und seele, und all seiner vernunfft, Hertz, Mut und sein, willen und begirden, auch allen eusserlichen und Innerlichen Krafften . . . , mit all sein tichten, denken, reden, thun und wirken, . . . fur Gottes angesichte und ernstem Gerichte, ohne die widergebuert, ausser Christo und der gnade, nach dem gerechten urteil daß Gesetzes, nichts uberal tüge noch gelte, nichts gutes sey noch habe." Spangenberg, *Bekentnus und Erbieten*, 6.

[51] ". . . das Menschliche Natur und Wesen nach dem vfall fleisch aus fleisch geboren, an ihm selbst, durch aus sunde und unrecht und also eben die Erbsünde selbst sei." Spangenberg, *Bekentnus und Erbieten*, 7.

original sin upheld and protected the Lutheran doctrine of justification. Already in their response to Wigand's book, the Mansfelders argued that their opponents' position was an "evil map" leading to a variety of heresies that accentuated the power of humankind to affect its own salvation, and diminished Christ's role by assuming that human nature was still good after the fall. Theirs did not. In fact, they argued, the proper understanding of original sin was the necessary starting point for all of Lutheran theology because it provided a foundation for the accurate definition of all articles of faith associated with the doctrine of justification.[52] Failure to correctly understand it, they feared,

> will open a huge window through which the Papists would adorn and defend their teachings on natural integrity; the Pelagians their freedom of the will; the Synergists their means of preparation for grace, that is, passive acceptance; and the Maiorists their necessity of good works for salvation.[53]

In the past they had fought these heresies alongside their Eislebener colleagues, but now they were convinced that their opponents' position would simply raise them again.[54] To allow this to happen must have felt like a betrayal.

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[52] "Aber in Warheit ist es [the controversy over Original Sin] nicht ein schlecht wort gezencke/ sondern betrifft den furnembsten und nötigsten Religions artikel einen/ one welchs rechten verstand einer weniger richtiges oder gewisses/ von den andern Artickeln wird wissen/ verstehen/ haben oder halten kann." Spangenberg, *Erklerung M. Cyriaci Spangenbergs*, 10.

[53] "ein gross fenster aufgethan wird, denn papisten ihre Lere von den *Naturalibus integris*; den Pelagianern Ir *liberum arbitrium*: den Synergisten Ir *modiculum, praeparationem ad gratiam, languidum assensum*; Und den Maioristen Ir *Necessitatem bonorum operum ad salutem*, zubeschönen und zu verteidigen." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a II, No. 521, fol. 19v.

[54] Wilhelm Sarcerius, one of Spangenberg's staunchest allies in the territory, went even further in his explanation of the deleterious effects of adopting a position that distinguished between original sin and the nature of humankind. It would support "the papists' teaching regarding the unblemished nature (*naturalibus integris*). For if human nature is something distinct and original sin is also something distinct, then human nature is still good in and of itself and with regard to all its best essence and powers, even after the fall." With this distinction, continued Sarcerius, the Pelagians and Synergists will argue that man can in some way contribute to his own salvation, for he is not essentially sinful. This difference would bring an Epicurean, godless lifestyle, for if original sin is something distinct from the human being, he can assume that *it* will be punished here and in eternity, but his substance will not. The Manichaeans would reassert themselves. The roles of law and Gospel would become confused if the body and soul in their entirety were not accused by the law, but only an evil thing attached to them. This distinction, thought Sarcerius, would wreak havoc on all true Christian theology. Wilhelm Sarcerius, *Christliche/ ware und richtige Bekentnis*

Moreover, because the Mansfelders interpreted their opponents' position (that human nature, after the fall, was not substantially sin) as tantamount to the claim that the human being in some way retains the *imago Dei*, they asserted that it robbed God of His exclusive entitlement to righteousness: "whoever will not allow the corrupted nature to be in and of itself evil, sin, and unrighteousness, makes himself equal to God, who alone is righteous."[55] Understanding the substance of humankind *as* original sin had the advantage of sharply delineating the contrast between God as righteous, good, and just, and man as unrighteous, evil, and corrupt.[56]

Like Flacius, the Mansfelders also argued that a clear and simple reading of Scripture required their definition of original sin. "The Scriptures" admitted Spangenberg, "do not simply state this proposi-

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von der Erbsünde/ sampt erzelung der fürnembsten ursachen/ warumb der Newe unterschied zwischen verderbter Menschlichen Natur und der Erbsünde/ für die widergeburt/ ausserhalb der gnaden und Christo/ nicht zu zulassen/ noch zu billichen/ mit angehengter notwendiger Schutzredt/ wider etliche aufflagen/ etc. (Mansfeld: n.p., 1573), 19–23.

[55] "Wer nhue die verterbte Natur an ir selbst nicht will lassen böse, Sünde und unrecht sein, Der setzet sie je Gott gleich." Spangenberg, *Bekentnus und Erbieten*, 8.

[56] Spangenberg also addressed this issue in his catechism or handbook on the issue of original sin: "Solte denn das der Ehre Gottes zu verkleinerung gereichen, Wenn man die Menschliche Natur, an ir selbst nach dem Fall, nicht Unrecht noch Sünde nennet? Jah, Denn die Schrifft zeuget das Gott allein gerecht, heilig, und gut sey. Aber alle Menschen von Natur unrecht, unheilig, böse, Gottlos, und Lügener, gantz und gar verderbt, und untüchtig, sind, Rom. 5, 4, Psal. 4, 14. So bald man nu zwischen verderbter Natur und Erbsünde einen unterscheid machet, und die verderbte Natur nicht wil angeerbte Sünde, und an ir selbst unrecht und böse sein lassen, So rechtfertigtet man je die Natur und menschliches Wesen, und setzet dieselbige Gott gleich, welches einen grosse Gotteslesterung ist, wider das Gebet Danielis am 9. 'Du Herr bist gerecht, Wir aber müssen uns schemen'…." Spangenberg, *Kinderlehre von der Erbsünde*, 30–31. The anonymous, but clearly pro-Spangenberg author of *Ob diese Rede und Lere*, wrote likewise: "Mich wundert aber/ das man sich in dieser offentlichen sachen so sperren mag/ Denn sag mir doch/ wofür und warumb Christus gestorben und aufferstanden sey? Es ist je umb unser Sünde/ und umb keines andern dinges willen geschehen/ nicht alleine für unsere Wirckliche Sünde dafür zubezalen/ sondern auch unser Person/ Natur und Wesen/ der Erbsünde oder Wesentlichen Sünde zuhelffen/ das ist/ Uns selbst/ frome/ gut/ gerecht und selig zumachen/ Derwegen wir je selbst/ an uns selbst/ ausser Christo zuvor Böse/ unrecht/ Sünde und verdampt gewesen sein müssen. Und sag mir weiter/ was darff Ich gleuben/ das Gott meine Natur/ Person und Wesen/ für gerecht achte umb Christus willen/ Oder das Ich selbst in Christo die gerechtigkeit werde/ wenn Ich meine Natur und Wesen an ihr selbst nicht für Sünde halte/ wenn Ich selbst das von Natur nicht sein wil/ sondern es zum hefftigsten leugne/ das Christus aus wilkür für mich ist worden/ Nemlich Sünde/ denn der so nicht selbsschüldig/ darff nicht/ das ein ander für in selbschüldig werde…." Anonymous. *Ob diese Rede und Lere/ die Erbsünde ist unsere verderbte Natur und Wesen/ in Doctor Martini Luthers Büchern gegründet und zufinden/ oder nicht. Notwendiger Bericht für die Einfeltigen* (Mansfeld: Andreas Petri, 1574), 6–7.

tion spelled out word for word. That we well know. But they demonstrate this opinion, for when they speak concerning original sin, they always use the language of substance."[57] For, continued the dean, they describe the nature of humankind, the human heart, human conception and birth, nature and essence as evil and sin. Moreover, when they speak of original sin, they "identify the old Adam, the flesh, the entire corrupted person, and use such words that can only mean the entire twisted, evil, corrupted, human nature. And so they must be understood."[58] As proof, the Mansfelders employed the following Scriptural passages:[59]

- Genesis 6:5 "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."[60]
- Psalm 14:2 "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one."[61]
- Psalm 51:5 "I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."[62]
- Matthew 15:19. "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies."[63]

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[57] "Das die Schrifft nicht disse proposition simpliciter setzten nach den Buchstaben, wissen wir auch wol. Sie setzet aber die meinung, denn wo sie *de peccato originali* redet, brauchet sie allenthalben *Vocabula Substantia*." Claußen, ed., "Cyriakus Spangenbergs Briefe," 207–208. Cyriakus Spangeberg to Johann von Hildesheim, April 15, 1570.

[58] "…weiset sie auf den alten Adam, aufs Fleisch, und den gantzen verterbten Menschen, und braucht solche wort, die von nichts anders den von der gantzen, verkerten, bösen, verderbten, Menschlichen Natur, können und mussen verstanden werden." Spangenberg, *Bekentnus und Erbieten*, 10.

[59] Other passages mentioned less frequently included: Genesis 6:3, Genesis 8:21, John 3:5–6, Romans 4:5, Romans 5:10, Romans 8:7, Galatians chapter 3, and Galatians 5:17.

[60] Spangenberg, *Bekentnus und Erbieten*, 10; Spangenberg, *Erklerung M. Cyriaci Spangenbergs*, 12–14; Spangenberg, *Eine Predigte Von der Sünde*, 17; Wincke, *Kurtze und einfaltige Fragen*, 34.

[61] Spangenberg, *Erklerung M. Cyriaci Spangenbergs*, 14–16; Spangenberg, *Kinderlehre von der Erbsünde*, 40.

[62] Spangenberg, *Bekentnus und Erbieten*, 10; Spangenberg, *Erklerung M. Cyriaci Spangenbergs*, 7 and 16–17; Wincke, *Kurtze und einfaltige Fragen*, 32.

[63] Spangenberg, *Bekentnus und Erbieten*, 10; Spangenberg, *Erklerung M. Cyriaci Spangenbergs*, 22–23; Spangenberg, *Eine Predigte Von der Sünde*, 17; Wincke, *Kurtze und einfaltige Fragen*, 35.

- II Corinthians 5 "For [God] hath made [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."[64]
- Ephesians 2:3 "And we were by nature children of wrath."[65]

To the Mansfelders, these passages implied substance, because in their opinion, humankind, with all its powers and attributes, is described as being in complete rebellion against God.

Spangenberg and his colleagues were also convinced that Luther had used the language of substance when he described original sin, and they added a number of proofs from the Reformer's writings to the list begun by Flacius. In a private letter from 1570, Spangenberg admitted that although at times Luther referred to original sin as a negative evil, a loss or lack of original righteousness, this did not repudiate his position found in other places, namely that with the destruction of one substance comes the creation of another.[66] Thus Luther had understood original sin as the substance of humankind. To support their assertion, they quoted in greater detail than Flacius had, the following passages from Luther.

- "Now [God] takes that member that has no other function than to pass along nature and personal essence, and he does this to make it clear that [original sin] inundated the entire essence and nature, that your birth and everything having to do with your production is corrupted and sin. This original sin or nature sin or person sin is the true, chief sin. If it did not exist, there would be no real sin. This sin is not committed like other sins, but it exists, it lives and does all other sins and is the essential sin, which does not sin [only] for an hour or a time. But wherever the person is and as long as he lives, there is this sin also."[67]

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[64] Spangenberg, *Erklerung M. Cyriaci Spangenbergs*, 34–38.

[65] Spangenberg, *Bekentnus und Erbieten*, 10; Spangenberg, *Erklerung M. Cyriaci Spangenbergs*, 31–33; Spangenberg, *Kinderlehre von der Erbsünde*, 41.

[66] "Ich weiss seher wol, das Lutherus an ettlichen orten das *peccatum originale: Amissionem et privationem Iusticiae originalis* nennet. Damitt leugnett er aber nicht *positionem novae formae*, wie an anderen orten seiner schrifften zu sehen. Es erfordertts auch nicht alleman die not, an allen orten alles zu sagen.... Luthero ist nicht verborgen gewesen, *Quod omnis destructio prioris formae sit positio novae*." Claußen, ed., "Cyriakus Spangenbergs Briefe," 208. Cyriakus Spangenberg to Johann von Hildesheim, April 15, 1570.

[67] "Nu er [Gott] aber das gelid nympt, das gar keyn werck hatt, denn das die natur und personlich weßen dadurch kompt, gibt er klerlich zuvorstehen, das es an dem

- "It is a great pearl of wisdom that one know that we are nothing but pure sin. For we should not have such a limited view of sin as the pope's teachings which describe it as nothing but thoughts, words, and deeds that are against the law of God. If you really want to define precisely what sin is, according to this Psalm, sin is everything that is born from Father and mother."[68]
- "Behold, it is true, that before you I am a sinner. That sin is my nature, my original essence, my conception, not to mention my words, deeds, thoughts, and entire life. How can I be without sin, when I am conceived in sin, and sin is my nature and character. I am an evil tree and by nature a child of wrath and sin. And therefore, as long and this nature and essence remains in and on us, so long are we sinners and must say: forgive us our sins, etc., until the body dies and crumbles."[69]

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gantzen weßen der natur feyle, das yhr gepurt und alles yhr herkommen sey vorderbet und sund, das ist: die erbsund odder natursund, odder personsund, die rechte hewbtsund; wo die nit were, ßo were auch kein wircklich sund. Diße sund wirtt nitt gethan, wie alle andere sund, ßondern sie ist, sie lebt und thutt alle sund und ist die weßentlich sund, die da nitt eyn stund odder zeyttlang sundigt, ßondern wo und wie lang die person ist, da ist die sund auch." *WA* 10/1/1: 508–509. The Mansfelders quote some or all of this passage in: Anonymous, *Ob diese Rede und Lere*, 3; Eisleben Colloquium, Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a II, No. 521, fol. 13r; [The Mansfelders], *Zwo hochnotwendige Fragen*, 2–3; Spangenberg, *Erklerung M. Cyriaci Spangenbergs*, 47; Claußen, ed., "Cyriakus Spangenbergs Briefe," 210. Cyriakus Spangenberg to Johann von Hildesheim, April 15, 1570; Spangenberg, *Bekentnus und Erbieten*, 12; Spangenberg, *Deutliche und nützliche erklerung*, 14; Spangenberg, *Warhafftige/ gewisse/ bestendige*, 2; Spangenberg, *Kinderlehre von der Erbsünde*, 12–13; Wincke, *Kurtze und einfaltige Fragen*, 26. For Flacius' use of this passage, see [56]. For the Mansfelder laity's use of this passage, see [236].

[68] "Magna itaque sapientia est, scire, nos nihil esse quam peccatum, ne sic leviter de peccato sentiamus, sicut Papae doctores, qui definiunt, peccatum esse dictum, factum aut cogitatum contra legem Dei. Quin tu sic defini secundum hunc Psalmum, Peccatum esse hoc totum, quod est natum ex patre et matre," which the Mansfelders translated as: "Das ist eine grosse weisheit/ das einer wisse/ das wir nichts denn lauter Sünde sind/ und nicht so einen geringen verstand von der Sünde haben/ als des Babsts Lere/ welche sagen/ das die Sünde ander sey/ denn Wort/ Wercke/ Gedancken/ so wider das Gesetz Gottes sind/ Wenn due eigentlich sagen wilst, was die Sünde sey, so mustu nach diesem Psalm Sagen, Sünde ist alles das, das von Vater und Mutter geboren wird." *WA* 40/2:322. The Mansfelders quote some or all of this passage in: [The Mansfelders], *Zwo hochnotwendige Fragen*, 4–5; Sarcerius, *Christliche/ ware und richtige Bekentnis* 8; Spangenberg, *Bekentnus und Erbieten*, 9; Spangenberg, *Warhafftige/ gewisse/ bestendige*, 6; Spangenberg, *Eine Predigte Von der Sünde*, 16; Spangenberg, *Kinderlehre von der Erbsünde*, 15. For Flacius' use of this passage, see [56]. For the Mansfelder laity's use of this passage, see [236].

[69] "Sihe, so war ists, das ich fur dir ein sunder bin, das auch sunde mein natur, mein anhebendes wesen, mein empfengnis ist, schweig denn die wort, werck und gedancken und nach folgend leben. Wie sollt ich on sunde sein, so ich ynn sunden gemacht, und sunde mein natur und art ist. Ein böser bawm bin ich und von natur

To Flacius' list, the Mansfelders added other quotations from Luther, the two most recurrent of which were:

- "Scripture demonstrates in all examples and teaches from cover to cover that our sin within us is not a work or a deed. Rather it is the nature and entire essence. Therefore God takes that member which is essential to birth and through which human nature is passed along, as if to say, 'your birth, your nature, and your entire essence is sin and impure.'"[70]
- "Observe this, that what Paul said is the chief part and middle point of this letter and the entire Scripture, namely that everything is sin that is not saved through the blood of Christ and made righteous in faith. So get a good handle on this text. For all works, service, and glory are left behind and all that remains is God's grace and honor."[71]

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ein kind des zorns und der sunde, und darumb also lange als die selbe natur und wesen ynn und an uns bleibt, so lange sind wir sunder und müssen sagen: verlas uns unser schuld, etc. bis das der leichnam sterbe und undergehe." *WA* 18:501. The Mansfelders quote some or all of this passage in: [The Mansfelders], *Zwo hochnotwendige Fragen*, 4; Sarcerius, *Christliche/ ware und richtige Bekentnis*, 7; Spangenberg, *Erklerung M. Cyriaci Spangenbergs*, 50–51. For Flacius' use of this passage, see [56]. For the Mansfelder laity's use of this passage, see [238].

[70] "…das treybt die Schrifft in allen exempeln und leren durch und durch. Unser sünde inn uns ist nit ain werck oder ain todt, sondern ist die Natur, darumb nympt got das glid darzu, das zu der geburt gehört und da die menschliche Natur gepflanzet ist, als wolt er zu uns sprechen, 'Dein geburt, dein nature und gantzes wesen ist sünd unnd unrayn.'" *WA* 12:403. The Mansfelders quote some or all of this passage in: Anonymous, *Ob diese Rede und Lere*, 1–2; [The Mansfelders], *Zwo hochnotwendige Fragen*, 3; Sarcerius, *Christliche/ ware und richtige Bekentnis*, 7; Claußen, ed., "Cyriakus Spangenbergs Briefe," 210. Cyriakus Spangenberg to Johann von Hildesheim, April 15, 1570; Spangenberg, *Erklerung M. Cyriaci Spangenbergs*, 50; Spangenberg, *Deutliche und nützliche erklerung*, 14; Spangenberg, *Bekentnus und Erbieten*, 12; Spangenberg, *Warhafftige/ gewisse/ bestendige*, 3; Spangenberg, *Kinderlehre von der Erbsünde*, 12; Cyriakus Spangenberg, *Kleine Antwort M. Cyriaci Spangenbergs/ Auff die vermeinte Abfertigung der Eislebenischen Prediger* (n.p., 1577), 5; Sylvius, *Beweyß/ Das Magister Cyriakus Spangenberg*, 2; Wincke, *Kurtze und einfaltige Fragen*, 26. For the Mansfelder laity's use of this passage, see [239].

[71] "Mercke diß, da Paulus sagt ist das Heubtstuck und Mittelplatz dieser Epistel und den gantzen Schrifft, Nemlich das alles Sünde ist, was nicht durch das Blut Christi erlöset, im Glauben gerecht wirdt. Darum fasse diesen text wol. Denn hie ligt darnider aller wercke verdienst und rhum/ wie er selbs hie sagt/ und bleibet allein lauter Gottes gnade und ehre." One of the authors suggests that this quotation comes from Luther's glosses on Romans 3, but I have been unable to find the reference. The Mansfelders quote some or all of this passage in: Anonymous, *Ob diese Rede und Lere*, 3; [The Mansfelders], *Zwo hochnotwendige Fragen*, 5; Spangenberg, *Kinderlehre von der Erbsünde*, 16; Spangenberg, *Bekentnus und Erbieten*, 9; Spangenberg, *Erklerung*

The point is, argued the Mansfelders, that such passages demonstrated or implied a substantial transformation of humankind through the fall into sin even if Luther did not employ the term "substance." If one wanted to follow Luther then, it was necessary to believe that the substance of humankind (or human nature) was original sin.

The final issue bound up in the controversy for the Mansfelders (as well as for Flacius) was the role of philosophy or "human reason" in the interpretation of Scripture, an issue upon which they expanded considerably. If their position on original sin protected Luther's central doctrine of justification, the means by which they achieved that definition preserved another of the Reformer's important legacies, the elimination of "human reason" from the exegesis of Scripture. In fact, argued Anthonius Otto, a pastor from nearby Nordhausen who supported the Mansfelders, "there is not one letter of any of our articles of faith that is not diametrically, completely, entirely opposed to all reason, sense, and understanding. But what else should the revelation of God, through the Scriptures and the power and enlightenment of God the Holy Spirit be?"[72] This position may sound paradoxical in light of the Mansfelders' approval of the word "substance" to describe original sin, and, indeed, to a certain degree it was. But in their eyes, to suggest that original sin was a *substance* was merely to state succinctly the meaning of the Scriptures and Luther. To call it an *accident* as they accused their opponents of doing, was to bend, twist, and distort Scripture and Luther to fit philosophy and human reasoning. They would further argue that their opponents attached all of the philosophical baggage associated with the word *substance* to their definition, but they themselves did not. This may be another reason why, in their own writings, the Mansfelders never employed Flacius' distinctions within the substance of humankind as outlined in the *Clavis Scripturae*.

Despite their claims to dispense with human reasoning, however, the Mansfelders, like Flacius, did rely on philosophical distinctions

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M. Cyriaci Spangenbergs, 53; Spangenberg, *Warhafftige/ gewisse/ bestendige*, 8; Sylvius, *Beweyß/ Das Magister Cyriakus Spangenberg*, 3.

[72] "So doch nicht ein Buchstab ist/ von allen Artickeln unsers Glaubens/ der nicht stracks/ gantz und gar/ wider alle Vernunfft/ Sinne und Verstand gieng/ was dörffte es sonst der offenbarung Gottes/ durch die Schrift und Gottes des H. Geists Kraft und Erleuchtung?" Anthonius Otto, *Prafatio Wider die Trunckenen Bawren von der Erbsünde* (Andreas Petri: Mansfeld, 1574), 3.

and logic,[73] as evidenced by a letter from Spangenberg to his friend Johann von Hildesheim.[74] Here the dean argued that Scripture and his own experiences supported Flacius' views,[75] belying his reliance on Flacius' conceptual framework. He had, he insisted, always understood original sin to be a substance.

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[73] One of the Mansfelders, Andreas Langius, demonstrated this reliance on Flacius' thought. "Sondern der Streit ist allein von dem Hertzen/ oder der Vernunfft und willen/ als der Seelen öberster und fürnembsten krefften/ so fern dieselben betrachtet werden/ ausser dem Reich der gnaden und Christi/ fur der Widergeburt/ in Geistlichen/ Gottlichen und Himlischen dinge/ so vil Gottes ehre/ unsere seligkeit und das ewige leben betreffen thut. Do ist der Mensch im grunde/ und auffs eusserst zerstört/ verderbt und verkert/ Ja aus dem Bilde Gottes/ ein Bild des Leidigen Satans/ und ein Brunquel aller bösen lüste/ begierden/ neigungen/ Gedancken/ Wort und wercken/ wider Gott und sein Heiliges Gesetz worden. Denn davon wird fürnemlich in der Theologia gehandelt/ Wenn man von der Erbsünde und dem Freyen willen leret und Disputirt/ Weil der Mensch anfenglich/ nicht allein zu diesem zeitlichen leben/ sondern viel mehr zum ewigen leben von Gott erschaffen/ umb welches willen auch Christus uns geschenck/ und der heilige Geist erworben ist." Andreas Langen and Hieronymus Hauboldt, *Richtige und in Gottes Wort gegrundte Bekentnis von der Erbsünde* (n.p., 1576), 8. One sees here a veiled reference to Flacius' divisions of human nature, alongside his insistence that this is a question of theology rather than philosophy. This quotation exemplifies how the Mansfelders could employ Flacius' language and reasoning while rejecting the notion that their position was based on philosophy, a phenomenon apparent in a writing by the pastors of the district of Schraplau, one of the territory's twelve districts. They sided en masse with Spangenberg, referring obliquely to Flacius' divisions within the soul. With regard to what they say is Luther's insistence that the essence of humankind was sin, they wrote: "Den wir wissen sehr wol, das der man Gottes mitt solcher beschreibung nicht des Menschen Natur und wesen meine, wie es physice und nach den ausserlichen glidmassen, ausser dem gesetz betrachtett wirtt. Aber nichts desto weniger meinet er hiemit zu forderst und eingenttlich das beste theil am Menschen, nach welchem er Gotte solle gleich und sein bilde sein, nemlich die vernunfft mit verstandt und willen…." *Der Predicannten im Ampt Schraplau so bestendigen bleiben Anntwort, auff negst obgemeltte Notel, ann das Ministerio zu Eislebenn*. Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. 201 A, fol. 91r–v.

[74] Spangenberg's letter of April 17, 1570 comes in response to Hildesheim's inquiries into the churchman's views on the controversy over original sin. Claußen, ed. "Cyriakus Spangenbergs Briefe," Cyriakus Spangeberg to Johann von Hildesheim, April 15, 1570, 207–213.

[75] "…Ich meiner meinung de peccato ex testimoniis scripturae und den Argumentis, die D. Illyricus in suis Demonstrationibus prolixis angezogen,… und ex propriae Conscientiae experientia, so gewiß binn, das ich mich keinen Dialecticis Disputationibus, viel weniger mitt Sophisticis argumentationibus werde eins andern überreden lassen, noch mich mit jemand darüber inn verfengliche Disputationes einlassen. Mein sententiam, die ich wiess, das sie nicht kann solide refutirt werden, will ich gerne einem jeden mitt teilen: wer derselben beyfall geben will, woll gutt; wer nicht, den will ich nicht darzu zwingen, abundet sane suo sensu. Aber meine meinung, quae est ipsius Lutheri, will ich unverdampt haben." Claußen, ed., "Cyriakus Spangenbergs Briefe," 208–209. Cyriakus Spangenberg to Johann von Hildesheim, April 15, 1570.

> Therefore the opinion of Illyricus is not new to me, although the words 'sin is a substance' (*peccatum est Substantia*) have not been in common usage before. Nonetheless they are indeed the most precise and shortest summation of everything that Luther wrote, fought for, and remained true to against the sophists' lie that 'sin is an accident' (*peccatum esse accidens*)…. [Original sin] is indeed not an accident, as Luther so powerfully demonstrated. Now if it is not an accident, it must be allowed to be a substance. For one cannot name or designate a third category without creating something new.[76]

In the first part of this quotation Spangenberg argues that his position is merely Luther's, concisely stated. But the last two sentences indicate that Aristotelian reasoning, distinctions, and necessities played a role in his thinking as he argues backwards from the philosophical category of accident to that of substance. Thus even this avowed enemy of philosophy and human reason in the service of theology demonstrated an inability to think outside of such categories.

In large part, the Mansfelder clerics followed Flacius in their explanation of original sin. Although they simplified his definition, they employed and expanded upon his argument that it defended Luther's doctrine of justification, was necessitated by a clear reading of the Bible and Luther, and allowed those texts to speak without the imposition of philosophical terminology and logic upon them. But there was one key difference between the Mansfelders and Flacius. To a noticeably greater degree the Mansfelders emphasized that their definition defended Martin Luther with regard to his theology, his insistence on the authority of Bible over reason, and his belief in the perspicuity of the Scriptures. Moreover, the Mansfelder clergy placed even greater reliance on the authority of the Reformer's own writings than did Flacius. Thus they simplified and deemphasized the philosophical components of Flacius' definition, while emphasizing and expanding on these other aspects of the controversy that were more Luther-centric. This is not to say that Flacius was unconcerned with preserving the Reformer's

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[76] "Darumb ist mir des Illyrici meinung nicht newe gewesen: obwol die wort *peccatum est Substantia* zuvor nicht also inn gewönlichem gebrauch gewesen: so sind sie doch die aller eigenttlichste erklerung und kurtzest *Summarien* alles dessen, was Lutherus widder der Sophisten Lügen *peccatum esse accidens* geschreiben hat, gefochten, und erhalten…Solchs ist fürwar kein *Accidens*, wie Lutherus gewaltiglichen zeiget. Wenn es nhue kein *Accidens* ist, so muss mans je *Substantiam* sein lassen. Denn *Tertium* quiddam kann man nicht geben noch nennen, Man woltt denn ettwas newes fingieren." Claußen, ed., "Cyriakus Spangenbergs Briefe," 207. Cyriakus Spangenberg to Johann von Hildesheim, April 15, 1570.

legacy, but rather that in Luther's home territory, the fight would be more overtly over the heritage of its native son. Despite their close connections to the Reformer, however, the Eislebeners would see the controversy from a broader, more universal Christian perspective.

The Eislebeners' Position

When Hieronymus Mencel recited his statement on original sin during the second Weimar Colloquium of 1571, a statement he envisioned as a compromise between Flacius and the Jena professors, he failed to realize how one sentence would haunt him: "…The entire nature and essence of humankind is corrupted and completely sin."[77] In subsequent years, the Mansfelder clerics (and occasionally the laity as well) never ceased to recall this definition and accuse him of retreating from it. He denied the allegation, eventually composing a treatise specifically to explain his statement at Weimar. He had not meant to suggest that sin was a substance, a point, he insisted, that he had made repeatedly at the colloquium: "Earlier and afterwards, when we discussed [my definition] with the theologians, I said very clearly on more than one occasion that I did not want the summation I had composed to be misused to defend the proposition *Peccatum est Substantia*, sin is a substance."[78] Furthermore, continued Mencel, he had recited the statement quickly from memory, not realizing that he would be asked to give a confession and therefore unprepared to do so. Moreover, the atmosphere at the colloquium was friendly, with the participants working together to find a compromise between Flacius and the Jena professors. Thus he felt at ease offering a statement the implications of which he had not fully pondered, but for this he apologized. In this manner, Mencel distanced himself from the definition of original sin he had given at Weimar in 1571.

By the time of the Eisleben Colloquium a year later, Mencel and the Eislebeners were taking a very different approach. There they offered

[77] "…die gantze Natur und Wesen des Menschen verderbet und eitel Sünde ist." Mencel, *M. Hieronymi Mencelii/ Mansfeldischen Superintendenten*, 6.

[78] "Ich habe aber zuvor und hernach/ als wir zur unterrede mit den Theologen komen/ deutlich/ und etlich mal gesaget/ das ich diese von mir gefaste Summa/ keines weges darzu misbraucht haben wolte/ das man darunter die Rede/ *Peccatum est Substantia*, Die Sünde ist ein Wesen/ verteidgen solte." Mencel, *M. Hieronymi Mencelii/ Mansfeldischen Superintendenten*, 8.

Luther's definition of original sin from the Schmalkald Articles and insisted on the wording "corruption of nature," rather than "corrupted nature," a point that formed the first element of their definition of original sin. "For," they argued, "the word *corruption* designates the damage specifically in the abstract (*in abstracto*) and indeed, outside of nature (*extra subiectum*) it cannot be anything alone or self-standing, so the word corrupted should not mean anything more than to describe and refer to the damage, *in concreto*, in the nature."[79] In other words, the term *corruption* provided an abstract description of the impact of original sin, but it could not exist autonomously outside of the human being, while the word *corrupted* referred the status of human nature after the damage was done, and no longer in the abstract. The

[79] "Wie das wort VERDERBUNG/ den schaden sonderlich/ in abstracto nennet (der doch extra subiectum, ausser der Nature/ nichts sonderlichs noch selbstendiges sein kan) also sol das Wort VERDERBTE/ auch mehr nicht gelten/ denn das es den schaden in concreto, and der Natur nennen und beschreiben sol." Hieronymus Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere/ von der Erbsünde/ In Zwo Fragen gefasset. I. Obs recht sey/ die Erbsünde eine tieffe/ böse verderbung der gantzen Menschlichen Natur zu nennen? II. Und ob unterschiedlich von Menschlicher Natur/ und irer Verderbung zu leren/ und zu gleuben? Der Kirchen Christi zum bericht/ und kurtzem Bekentnis Auch allen Christen davon zu richten/ und urtheilen* (Eisleben: Urban Gaubisch, 1573), 22. The Eislebeners rarely described original sin as anything other than a corruption of nature. That they are so specific here, indicating that corruption designated original sin in its abstract, while corrupted referred to it in its concrete form, is out of the ordinary. More frequently they merely quoted the Schmalkald Articles, as they did earlier in the same pamphlet: "aus den Schmalkaldischen Artikeln gebraucht wird/ Das die Erbsünde sey/ und heisse/ Ein tieffe/ böse verderbung der gantzen Menschlichen Natur." Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 5; "Die Erbsünde ist sogar eine tieffe/ böse verderbung der Natur/ das sie keine vernunfft nicht kennet/ Sondern mus aus der Schrifft offenbarung gegleubt werden." Hieronymus Mencel, *Kurtze verzeichnis Etlicher grober Irrthumbe/ mit welchen die eingedrungne Miedlinge/ in Eisleben und anderer orte der Graffschafft Mansfelt/ behassetet sein. Den Einfeltigen Christen zur Warnung/ und unterricht/ furgestellet* (Eisleben: Urban Gaubisch, 1575), 5; "Das wort Erbsünde/ kan auch warhafftig und eigentlich zu reden/ nicht die Natur/ nicht unser Leib und Seel/ und unser Substantz/ und Natürlich Menschen Wesen heissen/ Sondern desselben Tieffe/ Böse/ Grundlose Verderbung/ wie es Lutherus/ da er am eingenlichsten/ und deutlichsten reden wil/ in Den Schmalkaldischen Articeln nennet." Hieronymus Mencel, *Eine Newe Spangenbergische Bekentnis, von der Erbsünde, das sie eigentlich sey, unserer verderbte Menschliche Natur, Und Gruendliche Widerlegung derselben: Geschrieben zum Unterricht und warnung, fur die Einfeltigen, sich für falscher Lere zu hueten* (Eisleben: Urban Gaubisch, 1575), 19; "Die Erbsünde ist eine Tieffe, Böse Verderbung der gantzen menschlichen Nature, etc." The Pastorate of Mansfeld, *Abfertigung/ des spangenbergischen Irrthumbs/ von der Erbsunde. Mit kurtzer Erzelung/ wie dieser Streit in die Graffschaft Mansfeld komen ist. Sampt Rettung der Sprüche heiliger Schrifft/ und Lutheri. Auch kurze/ und richtige Bekenntnis von der Erbsünde. Durch die Prediger in der Graffschaft Mansfeld/ in irem christlichen Synodo zu Eisleben verfasset* (Halle: Urban Gaubisch, 1576), 51.

Eislebeners admitted that traditionally the church had used the term *corrupted nature* to describe the damage caused to human nature by original sin, but that Flacius now used it in a novel way to designate human nature in its entirety.[80]

The second component of the Eislebeners' definition was to insist that a clear distinction be made between fallen human nature and original sin: "After the fall,… the nature and the corruption…are considered different. Each is explained differently and must be held separate."[81] Thus children inherited two things from their parents: human nature and its disease, "which disease is called the actual and proper original sin. But the nature, whether or not it is already evil and corrupted, can in no way be called the original sin."[82] This distinction was the sticking point, claimed Mencel.[83]

What then was this "evil disease"? Here the Eislebeners were not very specific. Sometimes they conceived of it as a sickness,[84] but often they

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[80] "Zum dritten/ ist auch das bedencklich/ wol zuerwegen/ und zu merken/ das Illyricus das wort verderbte Natur/ viel anders erkleret/ denn es bisher in der Kirchen breuchlich gewesen." Hieronymus Mencel, "Vorrede," Heinrich Roth, *Catechismi Predigt. Durchaus gericht auff den Catechismum D. Mart. Lutheri/ darinnen die fünf Heubtstück Christlicher Lere/ sampt dem Morgen und Abendsegen/ dem Tischsegen/ und entlich der gantzen Hausstaffel/ verfasset sind/ mit einer Vorrede. M. Hieron: Mencelii/ der alten löblichen Graffschafft Mansfelt Superintendenten* (Eisleben: Urban Gaubish, 1573), 14.

[81] "…nach dem Fall/…die Natur…und ire verderbung/ unterschiedlich betrachtet/ und von einem jeden auch unterschiedlich geleret/ und gehalten werden solle." Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 22. Further along Mencel clarifies, "…Wir allein unterschied machen und halten/ zwischen der essentia, das ist/ zwischen dem Wesen der Natur/ des Leibes/ der Seelen/ und allen wesentlichen krefften des Menschen an inen selbs/ und irrer grewlichen/ grossen/ und grundlosen verderbunge." Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 39. In the same pamphlet Mencel wrote yet again, "Das wir mit dem unterschiede/ und unterschiedlicher betrachtung Menschlicher Natur/ und irer verderbung bloss/ und allein dahin sehen/ Das unterschied/ und unterschiedlicher betrachtung sein/ und bleiben müsse." Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 9.

[82] "…dieselbige böse seuche heist eigentlich und recht DIE ERBSÜNDE/ Die Natur aber/ ob sie schon böse und verderbet ist/ kan…keines weges Erbsünde genennet werden." Mencel, *Eine Newe Spangenbergische Bekentnis*, 24.

[83] "Und ist dis fürnemlich zu mercken/ und im gedechtnis zubehalten/ Das der einige/ und rechte Zweck/ des Streits zwischen uns anfenglich gewesen/ und hernach bleiben ist/ wie auch noch für und für immerdar ist/ und bleibet/ das gefragt wird: Ob zwischen Menschlicher Natur Substance/ und Wesen/ und irer verderbung/ nach dem fall/ zu unterscheiden sey/ oder nicht? Wir haben allezeit Ja gesagt/ und sagen noch Ja. Die Mansfeldischen haben Nein gesagt/ und sagen auch noch Nein." Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 7.

[84] "Sondern unsere meinunge ist/ das wir mit D. Luther/ und der Augspurgischen Confession/ die Erbsünde/ durch gleichnis eine grewliche und erschreckliche Erbseuche und Kranckheit zum ewigen tode nennen." Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 36.

described what it was not. Although it was not a substance, "one cannot really call original sin an accident" either, stated Mencel.[85] Moreover, they maintained that, "Without exception we have never . . . proclaimed ourselves in favor of [the word] *accident*, for we do not use that word, nor have we [ever]."[86] Not only did they deny employing the word, they claimed that "we also do not teach that original sin is an added or attached accident or a quality affixed to the nature, body, and soul, like paint on a wall, or that it belongs to the nature and essence of man as much as a wreath placed on a young girl's head belongs to her essence and body."[87] Medieval scholastics had traditionally used these analogies in their definitions of the term *accident*, something non-essential to the substance of the object.

When forced, however, to say what original sin was, the Eislebeners offered two explanations. According to the Hebrew language, they claimed, sin "was something unrighteous, unclean, corrupted, and therefore according to God and his holy laws, guilty, punishable, and damned."[88] But sin was also "the *reatum seu culpam & poenam*, the

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[85] "Man könne die Erbsünde nicht wol ein Accidens nennen." Mencel, *Erklerung/ Der Weinmarischen Bekentnis*, 15.

[86] "Also haben wir uns allzeit . . . des Accidentis halben/ erkleret/ Nemlich/ das wir dasselbe wort nicht brauchten/ noch gebrauch hetten." Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 8; elsewhere Mencel writes, "[ich] habe weder offenen Schrifften oder Predigten/ die Sünde ein Accidens nennen wollen." Mencel, *Erklerung/ Der Weinmarischen Bekentnis*, 15. He also reminded his parishioners of this fact. "Das seid ir auch schuldig/ uns die Warheit ungeschewet zu bekennen. Wir haben euch weder von Substantz/ oder Accidens gepredigt." Mencel, *Erklerung/ Der Weinmarischen Bekentnis*, 3. Indeed, it seems to be true that the Eislebeners did not use the word *accident* publicly, as Christopher Irenaeus, one of their chief opponents admitted in a sermon. But, said Irenaeus, they also failed to condemn the use of the word *accident*. Christopher Irenaeus, *Eine Hochzeit Predigt vom Breutgam Christo/ und seiner Braut der Christlichen Kirchen gethan zu Eisleben in S. Peters Kirchen den 6. Julii. Anno Domini 1573* (Mansfeld: Andreas Petri, 1573), 13.

[87] ". . . Das wir auch nicht leren/ das Erbsünde/ ein anfliegendes/ und anklebendes Accidens oder qualitas sey/ das an der Natur/ Leib/ und Seele klebe/ wie farbe an der Wand/ Oder das so wenig zur Natur und Wesen des Menschlichen gehöre/ als ein krantz der auff einer Jungfrawen heubte stehet/ zu irem Wesen und Leibe gehöret." Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 36.

[88] ". . . etwas unrechtes/ unreines/ verderbtes/ und derhalben fur Gott und seinem heiligen Gesetze schuldig/ straffbar/ und verdammet." Mencel, *Eine Newe Spangenbergische Bekentnis*, 16. Elsewhere Mencel and the Eislebeners described their view of sin: "So nemen wirs in dem verstande an/ den Lutherus nach art der Hebraischen Sprache/ und mit ime bisher die Kirche gefüret hat/ Nemlich/ das Sünde ist/ und heisset/ nicht ein selbstendiges/ oder sonderliches Wesen/ Auch nicht eigentlich/ und blos *Hypostasin* oder *essentiam naturae humanae*, das Menschliche Wesen an im selbs/ Sonder die grewliche grundlose/ böse tieffe Verderbung/ Verunreinigung/

guilt and liability that have repercussions for both temporal and eternal punishment."[89] This definition of sin, argued Mencel, did not serve the Mansfelders' purpose, so they ignored it. But it was Luther's meaning when he called everything associated with humankind complete and utter sin.

> According to this explanation, the human being is called sin regarding his entire nature, body, soul, heart, mind, senses and everything that he is, which means in effect that he is corrupted, unclean, suspect, evil, unrighteous—a horror, guilty, and damned before God and his holy law.[90]

For the Eislebeners then, sin could be either corruption or the guilt associated with it. Corruption did not entail a complete transformation of human nature but an unrighteousness and uncleanness, thus the disease metaphor. Guilt, however, could be applied to the entire person as, they claimed, was Luther's intent when he called humankind nothing but sin from conception.

Like their opponents, the Eislebeners employed the Scriptures and writings of Luther in support of their views. From the Scriptures it was clear that human nature had been corrupted, they admitted, but unclear as to the degree to which this corruption had changed humankind. So their approach was not to employ the Scriptures and Luther so much as authorities for a definition of original sin, but as evidence for a distinction between human nature and the corruption that afflicted it. "For," they argued, "because the Scriptures demonstrate that God created the nature and the entire person even after the fall, that God abhors sin and had no part in its creation, rather that it comes from

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Verrückung/ und Verkerung/ der gantzen Menschlichen Natur und Wesens/ Umb welches schadens willen/ der Mensch von Gottes Gesetzte angeklaget/ verdammet/ und warhafftig fur Got ein grewel/ und ewig verstossen ist." Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 40. Mencel also said of the word *sin*, "Denn das wort Sünde/ heisset bey Luthero keins weges ein Wesen/ Sondern der Gebrechen und mangel deß Wesens/ Welches er sonst die tieffe böse Verderbung/ deß gantzen Menschlichen Wesens/ gewöhniglich/ und wo er am deutlichsten die Erbsünde beschreibet/ zu nennen pfleget." Hieronymus Mencel, *Postilla. Das ist/ Auslegung Der Evangelien/ So auf die Sontage/ Heupt/ und andere Fest/ durchs gantze Jahr in der Christlichen Kirchen gelesen werden/ Fürnemlich auss Gottes Wort/ und D. Luthers Schriften* (Leipzig: Abraham Camberg, 1596), 82.

[89] "…den *Reatum seu Culpam & Poenam*, die schuld und verpflichtung/ zu zeitlicher und ewiger straffe betreffe." Mencel, *Eine Newe Spangenbergische Bekentnis*, 16.

[90] "Nach dieser erklerung/ wird der Mensch seine gantze natur/ leib/ seele/ hertz/ muth/ sinn/ und summa alles was an im ist/ sünde genennet/ das heist so viel als verderbet/ unrein/ arg/ böse/ ungerecht/ fur Gott und seinen heiligen Gesetz ein grewel/ schüldig und verdampt." Mencel, *Eine Newe Spangenbergische Bekentnis*, 18–19.

Satan, so the Scriptures attest to a distinction [between human nature and sin]."[91]

As evidence for God's continuing role in the creation of human beings, and therefore of human nature, the Eislebeners cited the following passages:

- Job 10:8 "Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about."[92]
- Ecclesiastes 12:7 "And the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."[93]
- Isaiah 38:17 "But thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back."[94]
- Jeremiah 38:16 "…As the Lord liveth, that made us this soul…."[95]
- Ezekiel 18:4 "All souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine; the soul that sinneth, it shall die."[96]

Such passages verified that human beings, their nature and souls, were the work of God and remained so even after the fall into sin. Sin, on the other hand, was not from God and remained distinct from his creation.

- Psalm 5:5 "For thou are not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness."[97]
- I John 3:8 "He that committeth sin is of the Devil; for the Devil sinneth from the beginning."[98]
- I John 3:4–5, which Mencel paraphrased as, "Sins are the unrighteousness, and the Son of God is come in order to take away our

[91] "Denn die Schrift klar zeuget: Gott schaffet die Natur/ und den gantzen Menschen auch nach dem fall/ An der Sünde aber habe Gott keinen gefallen/ als die auch gar nicht von im/ Sondern vom Sathan her kommen ist/ So redet sie auch von einem jeden unterschiedlich/ und also/ das man aus derselben solchen unterscheid." Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 23.
[92] Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 23.
[93] Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 23.
[94] Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 23.
[95] Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 23.
[96] Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 23.
[97] Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 23.
[98] Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 23.

> sins (and not our human nature). And in him (since he is true man and took on our human nature) there is no sin."[99]

The Eislebeners believed that sin came from the Devil and corrupted humankind, which God had created untainted; but the corruption would eventually be removed by Christ. For this reason, it was necessary to make a clear distinction between human nature and sin.

The Eislebeners also used Luther's views to support their own, collecting passages from the Reformer's writings that they interpreted to mean that original sin was a corruption of nature.

- "The most important duty or capacity of the law is that it reveals original sin with all its fruits and demonstrates to humankind how very deep his nature has fallen and is corrupted to no end."[100]
- "For in his sin David saw, as if in a mirror, the impurity of his entire nature."[101]
- "Therefore our sin is that we are conceived and born in sin. David learned this from his own experiences. Therefore he defined sin to signify that it was a corruption of the entire man, inside and outside. Thus no [bodily] member can perform that duty anymore, as it had in paradise prior to sin."[102]
- "In the same way we experience how deep the original sin corrupted us."[103]

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[99] Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 24.

[100] "Aber das fürnemeste [ampt] oder krafft des gesetzs ist, das es die Erbsunde mit fruchten und allem offenbare, und dem menschen zeige, wie gar tieff seine nature gefallen und grundlose verderbet ist." *WA* 50:224. This quotation can be found in Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 16–17.

[101] "Nam in his suis peccatis videt David ceu in speculo TOTIUS NATURAE IMPURITATEM." *WA* 40/2:321. The emphasis designated by the capitalization is not found in Luther's version, but only in Mencel's quotation of it found in Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 17.

[102] "Ergo peccatum nostrum est, quod in peccatis nati sumus et concepti. Hoc didicit David experientia propria. Ideo sic definit, ut significet peccatum esse CORRUPTIONEM omnium virium, interiorum, & exteriorum: Adeo ut nullum membrum officium suum ita nunc faciat, sicut in Paradiso, ante Peccatum." *WA* 40/2:325–6. The emphasis designated by the capitalization is not found in Luther's version, but only in Mencel's quotation of it found in Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 17.

[103] "dann die selben erfaren, wie tieff die erbsund unnß vorterbet hat." *WA* 1:198. This quotation can be found in Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 19.

- "Those individuals are unable to truly repent who neither correctly nor entirely understand that the entire human nature is horribly corrupted and damaged through the original sin."[104]

To the Eislebeners, these citations demonstrated convincingly that Luther believed original sin had deeply corrupted human nature. But these citations do not prove very convincingly that Luther maintained a distinction between the corruption and human nature, so the Eislebeners buttressed them with the following citations from the Reformer that speak more directly to that issue.

- "Spiritual people should know to maintain the distinction between original sin and the creature."[105]
- "But Moses makes a distinction between the pure work of God and the uncleanness and damage with which original sin beflecked the work of God."[106]
- "The Devil did not create those who do not hear God's word, not their mouths, eyes, reason, or other attributes. No, all this is God's creation and gifts. Therefore, one must differentiate between the essence and the use."[107]

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[104] "Also müssen von der Busse halten/ die/ so nicht recht noch gentzlich verstehen/ das die gantze Menschliche Natur durch die Erbsünde grewlich verderbt und beschedigt ist." I have been unable to discover the origin of this quotation in Luther's works, but Mencel cites it as Luther in Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 19.

[105] "Geistliche Leute sollen wissen unterschied zu halten/ zwischen der Erbsünde und Creatur." I have been unable to discover the origin of this quotation in Luther's works, but the following Eislebeners cite it as Luther: Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 26; Johan Hugo, *Grundlicher und Klarer bericht von der Erbsünde/ Was dieselbe eigendlich sey. Aus des tewren Mans Gottes D. Luthers Schriften gezogen. Zu Einfeltigem Bericht Frommer Christen/ und Widerlegung der ungewönlichen Reden Illyrici* (Eisleben: Urban Gaubisch, 1573), 18. Hugo was a pastor in Freideburg who supported the Eislebeners and whose work was published in Eisleben during the controversy.

[106] "Es sondert aber alhie Moses auch aber das reine Wercke Gottes/ von der unreinigkeit und schande/ mit welcher die Erbsünde das Werck Gottes besprenget hat." I have been unable to discover the origin of this quotation in Luther's works, but Mencel cites it as Luther in: Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 26.

[107] "Solchs soll aber nicht also verstanden werden, als hette der Teuffel sie geschaffen, inen mund, augen, vernunfft und anders geben. Nein, Solches ist Gottes geschöpf und gaben. Derhalb muß man das wesen und den brauch unterscheiden." *WA* 52:200. This quotation can be found in: Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 26; and Hugo, *Grundlicher und Klarer bericht*, 20.

- "Although God certainly does not create the sin, he also does not cease to form the nature that is corrupted by sin…and to multiply it, just as when a master makes carvings from spoiled wood."[108]
- "Likewise, however true it is that the flesh is a creature of God, it is not inclined toward chastity, but unchastity. However true it is that the heart is a creation of God, nonetheless, it is not inclined toward humility nor toward love of neighbor."[109]
- "God promised and sent his Son Jesus Christ to save us from the Devil's kingdom and the horrible tyranny, to overthrow it and tread on it violently, to take it and break the Devil's work in us, namely sin and death—so that we might be free of sin, liberated, good, pious, righteous, and be returned from death into life."[110]
- "With regard to the body of the natural man, it is the same as all other members and powers of humans. Who doubts that man has been created through the eternal word in all his powers, like all other things, and that he is a creature of God? But afterwards there is nothing good in him, as Moses said in Genesis 6—All of his thoughts and senses with all their powers are only inclined toward evil."[111]

In addition to these quotations, Mencel relied on an argument based upon language and syntax. Luther, he says, wrote that

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[108] "Ob Gott die Sünde wol nicht machet/ so lest er dennoch nicht abe/ die Natur so durch die Sünde…verdorben ist/ zu formirn/ und zu mehren/ als wenn ein Meister aus faulem Holtz Bilder machet." I have been unable to discover the origin of this quotation in Luther's works, but Mencel cites it as Luther in: Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 26.

[109] "Darumb wie warlich das fleysch ein creatur gottis ist, so ists doch nit zur keuscheit, sondern zur unkeuscheyt geneygt. Wie warlich das hertz gottis creatur ist, so ists doch nit zur demutt, zur liebe des nehisten, sondern zu dem hohmut und seyn eygen liebe geneygt." *WA* 10/1/1:204. This quotation can be found in: Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 26.

[110] "Gott hat uns seinen Son Christum Jhesum verheissen/ und geschenckt/ das er uns vons Teufels Reich und grewlicher Tyranney errette/ in unter sich werffe/ und zutrette/ im alle gewalt und macht neme/ und seine Werck/ Sünde und Todt in uns zubreche/ was wir von Sünden loss/ frey/ gut/ fromb/ und gerecht/ und aus dem Tode zum Leben bracht würden." This citation is a rough paraphrase of *WA* 36:68 and may be found in: Hugo, *Grundlicher und Klarer bericht*, 19.

[111] "Es ist mit dem naturlichen liecht wie mit allen andernn gelieden und krefften des menschen; wer zweyffellt daran, das der mensch sey durch das ewige wort gottis geschaffen ynn alle seynen krefften wie alle andere ding? Und ist gottis creatur. Aber dennoch ist keyn guttis ynn yhm, das ist (wie Moses sagt Gen. 6.): alle seyn gedancken unnd synn mit allen krefften sind nur zu dem böβen geneygt." *WA* 10/1/1:204. This quotation can be found in: Hugo, *Grundlicher und Klarer bericht*, 19.

> Nature and its entire essence together with their entire origin is corrupted and sin. *Corrupted* and *sin* are here one thing, so *corrupted* and *sin* cannot be the essence itself, rather the corruption of the essence and the sinful evil habit. Luther calls nature and the essence, as well as sin and the corruption, each a distinct thing and says, "Where there is nature, there also is sin." From this it is certain that they are two distinct things.[112]

According to the Eislebeners, Luther's statement that nature had become sin was a euphemism that meant simply that nature had become sinful. "Such words, as he spoke them, should not and cannot mean anything other than what he said immediately thereafter—that the nature is become sinful. Having become sin and having become sinful—one means the same as the other."[113] In this way, the Eislebeners interpreted those of Luther's words that seemingly demonstrated that sin was a substance to support their view that sin had corrupted that substance.

But the Luther citations employed by the Eislebeners to support their position had neither the piquancy nor the direct relationship to the question of original sin found in those used by the Mansfelders. And in the end, the Eislebeners quoted Luther far less frequently than did their opponents, often excluding the words of the Reformer altogether from their treatises and sermons. This decision rested not only on the nature of the Luther passages they found, but on a larger strategy, that is, on their own ancillary arguments.

Rather than forcefully promoting their own definition of original sin in opposition to that of the Mansfelders, most often the Eislebeners chose rather to attack as heterodox the implications of their opponents' position, critiques that would quickly become a significant part of the wider debate. When Viktorin Strigel made the distinction between original sin and human nature at Weimar (1560), he desired

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[112] "Die Natur/ und ihr gantzes Wesen/ sampt ihrem herkommen/ ist verderbet und Sünde. Verderbt und Sünde seyn/ ist hie einerley/ So muß ja Verderbt/ und Sünde sein/ nicht das Wesen selbst/ Sondern des Wesens Verderbung/ und Sündliche Unart sein. Nennet Lutherus die Natur/ und das Wesen/ Item/ die Sünde/ und die Verderbung/ ein jedes sonderlich/ und spricht: Wo Natur ist/ da ist auch sünde. Daraus ist gewiß/ das es auch zweierley sey." I have been unable to discover the origin of this quotation in Luther's works, but Mencel quotes it as Luther in: Mencel, *Postilla*, 83.

[113] "Die wort aber/ da er spricht sollen und können auch anders nicht verstanden werden/ Denn wie er selbst aller nechst zuvor gesaget hat: Das die Natur Sündlich worden ist/ Das zur Sünde worden/ und Sündlich worden sein/ Eins so viel als das andere heisset." Mencel, *Postilla*, 83.

to maintain the capacity of the will, located in human nature, to assent to its own conversion. The Eislebeners, on the contrary, asserted that by maintaining this distinction they did not intend to diminish the damage caused by original sin,[114] but to avoid falling into heresy. Any formulation that combined human nature and original sin, they argued, merely masked the proposition "sin is a substance," a notion traditionally considered heretical by Christians. This critique of the Mansfelder position quickly became the centerpiece of all Eislebener pamphlets and sermons so that rarely did they engage the Mansfelder arguments about language, categories of thought, and the proper way of thinking and speaking about Scripture. They simply accused the Mansfelders of heresy.

The Eislebeners remaining associated arguments were critiques of the implications that followed from the premise that sin is a substance. First, this position reiterated the heresy of the Manichaeans 1,200 years prior who had claimed just that—that sin is an substance (*Peccatum est substantia*).[115] Second, Luther never asserted nor implied that sin

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[114] "Zum andern/ protestiren wir *solenniter*, und notdürfftig/ das wir keinen solchen unterscheid machen/ darinne wir die Natur/ mit den Pelagianern oder Synergisten/ im aller geringsten entschüldigen/ Oder nach Papistischer art/ *Naturalia Manisse integra*, das die Natur unverderbt blieben were/ sagen wolten." Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 35. Mencel even went so far as to defend the use of the word *accident* to describe original sin when the point was not to dimish its destructive nature, but merely to keep it distinct from human nature: "Denn was das wort Accidens anlanget/ sehen wir/ das sie [the Jena theologians] mit demselben nichts anders suchen/ noch leren/ denn das Natur und Sünde nicht ein ding sein." Mencel, Foreword to Roth's *Catechismi Predigt*, 25.

[115] "Erstlich aber sol man wissen/ und in gedechtnis behalten/ das sich der Zwyspalt/ in der Lere von der Erbsünde/ uber den worten erhoben hat/ Peccatum est Substantia, Die Sünde ist ein Wesen. Welche worte vorzeiten/ die Manicheer auch geführet haben. Und hat sie Illyricus/ aus der Manicheer Schulen/ zu unsern zeiten herführ gezogen/ und also glossiret/ das sie ime zu seinem furnemen dienen möchten/ und demnach in seine offentliche Bücher gesetzt/ und verteidiget." Mencel, *Kurtze verzeichnis*, 3; "Furs andere sollen sich die Christen erinnern/ das in nechst verschienen Pfingsten ein Kurtz Bekentnis (from Spangenberg) ausgegangen ist/ darinne von sieben Puncten gehandelt/ und alles mit kurtzen verzwickten worten/ und Sprüchen also gestellet ist/ das es auch zu dem ende dienen könne, das offtgesaget Manicheische Proposition *Peccatum est substantia*, darunter salvieret, erhalten werden kan." Mencel, *Kurtze verzeichnis*, 7. "Es wil aber Spangenberg in dieser/ und alle seinen Schriften/ im grunde und in der Warheit/ unter dem schein der Schrifft/ und Lutheri worten/ den alten Manicheischen und Illyrischen Cothurnum *Peccatum est Substantia*, Die Sünde ist ein Wesen/ erhalten und ausbringen." Mencel, *Eine Newe Spangenbergische Bekentnis*, 2–3; "Das wir uns mit grewlichen Paradoxis, und abschewlichen newen Reden/ nicht verwirren lassen/ Welche aus verwerffunge des vielgemelten unterschieds alle folgen/ wie sie den auch ausdrücklich in die Bücher gesetzt/ und mit

was a substance, so the Mansfelders' claims that he did constituted a flagrant misuse of the reformer's teachings.[116] Third, to say that the entire essence of human nature has become original sin was to make the Devil into the creator of postlapsarian humankind, a heretical position, for the Devil had no powers to create.[117] Fourth, failure to

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grewlichem Ergernis ausgebreitet/ und den Leuten eingebildet worden/ Nemlich diese: *Peccatum est Substantia*, Die Sünde ist ein Wesen." Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 38. "Nu ists aber gewis, das solche Rede (wie auch zuvor gedacht ist) lenger denn vor zwölff hundert jaren, von der reinen rechtgleubigen Kirchen, an den alten Manicheern gestrafft und verdampt worden.... Das ist furwar aller streit zwischen uns. Das ir [the Mansfelders] furgebet, das Ubel oder die Sünde, sey ein Wesen, wir aber sagen, es sey kein Wesen." The Pastorate of Mansfeld, *Abfertigung/ Des Spangenbergischen Irrthumbs*, 55; Indeed, for Mencel, the Mansfelders were even worse than the original Manichaeans. "Ja es wird im ein ergerer Manicheismus zugerechtnet/ denn der alte schwarm der Manicheer je gewesen ist. Ursache/ Der alte Manicheismus wie grob und grewlich er je gewesen ist/ hat er doch Gott dem Herrn das seine gelassen/ und allein furgegeben/ das die böse Natur/ welche der böse Gott (der leidige Teufel) geschaffen hette/ oder die Gifft (wie Spangenberg schreibet) die der Teufel die gute natur geschut hat/ mit guten Natur vermenget were. Aber hie wird auch Gott das seine genommen/ und dem Teufel zugeschrieben/ in deme/ das Spangenberg/ Ireneus/ Sarcerius/ und andere ires anhanges/ stracks streitten/ und offentlich schreiben/ die Menschliche Natur sey vom Teufel." Mencel, *Erklerung Der Weinmarischen Bekentnis*, 29–30. In addition to these citations, the Eislebeners dedicated an entire treatise to a comparision between the Mansfelders and the Manichaeans. *Beweis und Erzehlung/ In welchen stücken und Reden/ die jtzigen Prediger zu Mansfeldt/ und ire Verwandten/ sich mit den Alten Manicheern/ vergleichen. Auff iren Trotz/ und vielfältige anforderung/ Auch zu widerlegung beschwerlicher Calumnien/ geschreiben Durch die Prediger zu Eisleben* (Eisleben: Urban Gaubisch, 1574).

[116] "Denn Luthero ist das nie in sinn kommen, das er diese rede Peccatum est Substantia, jemals hette führen und brauchen wollen." Mencel, Foreword to Roth's, *Catechismi Predigt*, 12; "Also ist man darzu kommen/ das man unter Doct. Luthers worten und namen/ den verfluchten Manichaischen Cothurno (welchen die Christliche Kirche fur 1200. jaren verworffen/ und verdampt hat) das die Sünde ein Wesen sey/ einen Deckmantel gemacht hat." Mencel, *Kurtze verzeichnis*, 6–7; "Da man die Leute uberreden wil/ *Peccatum esse Substantiam*. Das die Sunde ein Wesen sey/ und schmükket solche alte verdampte Manicheische rede/ mit D. Luthers worten/ und Namen/ das es so viel heissen sol/ das die verderbte Menschliche Natur/ oder viel mehr der gantze Wesen/ Leib und Seele/ Eingentlich/ und one unterschied/ die Erbsünde selbst sey." Mencel, *Erklerung Der Weinmarischen Bekentnis*, 2; "Denselben behenget [Spangenberg] mit seinem glatten/ und sonderlich erfundenen und darzu erdachtem Schaffspeltz/ das er setzet/ 'Corrupta Natura/ unserer verderbte Menschliche Natur/ ist eigendlich die Erbsünde.' Diesem Schaffspeltze verhoffet er/ aus Luthero eine solche Farbe anzustreichen/ das in jederman als die rechte Lutherische Warheit anneme." Mencel, *Eine Newe Spangenbergische Bekentnis*, 3.

[117] "Dabey es auch nicht bleibt/ sondern man saget darzu/ das dieselbe unsere verderbte Menschliche Natur/ nicht Gottes geschöpffe/ Sondern EIGENTLICH/ EIGENTLICH/ ein Werck des Teufels sey." Mencel, *Erklerung Der Weinmarischen Bekentnis*, 2; "Ja das Illyricus schwermet/ das die Sünde nach dem falle sey *Substantia*, ein Wesen/ *a Sathana genita*/ vom Sathan gezeuget/ *novum monstrum*, ein newes ungehewres Wunderthier/ *a Diabolo conditum*, von Teufel geschaffen." Mencel,

distinguish between human nature (the work of God) and corruption (the work of the Devil) meant that prior to baptism God would not recognize human beings his own.[118] Fifth, if humankind was sin itself (prior to baptism), then sin itself must be baptized. But Christ had requested that sinners, not sin, be baptized.[119] Sixth, if the proposi-

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Eine Newe Spangenbergische Bekentnis, 18; The Mansfelders claimed (insisted the Eiselebeners) that "Die Verderbte zerstörete Menschliche Natur/ sey auch eigentlich ein Werck des Teufels." Mencel, *Eine Newe Spangenbergische Bekentnis*, 47; We [the Eislebeners] teach that "…denn im Artickel von der Schöpffung ists klar/ und allen Christen aus irem Catechismo bekandt/ das Gott auch noch unser Schöpfer ist/ von welchem wir Leib und Seel/ Vernunft und alle Sinne, etc. haben." Mencel, *Kurtze verzeichnis*, 8; "Zum ander/ Das wir auch nicht den Teufel zu einem Schöpffer auffwerffen dürffen/ Das von ime einige *Substantia*, böss oder gut herkomme. Welchs auch folget/ Wo abermal one unterschied essentia humana, das Wesen des Menschen/ oder der gantze Mensch die Sünde selbst ist/ Denn Sünde ist von Teufel." Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 38. The Eislebeners insisted that it was the Mansfelders' position that "die verderbte, ermordete, von Gott abgewendete, zerstörte menscheliche Natur, sey eigentlich ein werck des teufels." The Pastorate of Mansfeld, *Abfertigung/ Des Spangenbergischen Irrthumbs*, 58–59; "Die verderbte/ zerstörte/ ermordete Menschliche Natur/ Ist eigentlich/ eigentlich ein Werck des Teufels." The Eiselebeners, *Beweis und Erzelung*, 4. A variation or the flipside of this proposition was to call God the creator of evil, the Eislebeners often accused the Mansfelders of such. For if God created humankind, and humankind was substantially evil, than God created sin. The logical end to this line of reasoning was "Das unzelich viel Sünden/ sind ware Creaturen Gottes." Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 39.

[118] "Denn der gantze Mensche sey die Sünde selbs, das ist, wie sie reden, zum wesentlichen Bilde des Teufels worden, und sey zwar nicht allein die Sünde selbst, Sondern seine verstörte, verderbte, Menschliche Natur, sey auch (als die Erbsünde) eigentliche ein Werck des Teufels. Das Gott für der Widergeburt nichts am Menschen erkenne,…. Denn auch der man Gottes, Lutherus, da er von dem Gottlosen, und verdampten Pharao schreibet, machte er also zwishen seiner verderbten Natur, und der Sünde, einen unterscheid, Das er mit klaren worthen saget: Gott habe zwar denselben Gottlosen Tyrannen erschaffen, doch also, das die Bosheit in ime nicht gemacht hat." The Pastorate of Mansfeld, *Abfertigung/ Des Spangenbergischen Irrthumbs*, 61–62.

[119] The Eislebeners insisted that this was the position of their opponents: "Item das man saget/ Man solle und müsse die Erbsünde/ im Namen der heiligen Dreyfaltigkeit Teuffen. Oder/ Man müste die Erbsünde in die Tauffe sencken/ weil Christus die Tauffe umb irend willen/ notwendig habe einsetzen müssen." Mencel, *Erklerung Der Weinmarischen Bekentnis*, 2; "Die Erbsünde muß man im Namen der heiligen Dreyfaltigkeit teuffen." Mencel, *Eine Newe Spangenbergische Bekentnis*, 47; "Das man die Erbsünde in dem Namen der heiligen Dreyfaltigkeit teuffen müsse." Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 38; "Die Erbsünde mus im Namen der Dreyfaltigkeit getaufft werden." The Eislebeners, *Beweis und Erzelung*, 4; "Weil nu der mensche die Sünde selbs is, so müsse die Sünde getaufft werden…. Eben disen Irrthumb, lobet unt entschüldiget auch M. Spangenberg. Denn zu Mansfeld hat er Schneiders Lesterbüchlein drucken lassen, in welchem diese Verba formalta: Weil der Mensch der ein Sünder ist, getaufft wird, so wird die Sünde selbs getauft—Welches wider den klaren Befehl des Herrn Jhesu Christi ist, der da heisset Heiden, arme Sünder und Menschen teuffen. Und saget das nicht die Sünde, sondern der Mensch zum Reiche Gottes widergeboren und auffgenommen werde." The Pastorate of Mansfeld, *Abfertigung/ Des Spangenbergischen*

tion of the Mansfelders was true, not only the sinner, but the sin itself would eventually be received into grace. But Scripture stated that God hates sin.[120] Seventh, the Mansfelders had proposed that on the last day the essential unrighteousness would arise from the dead and be transformed into essential righteousness. But the Bible says that on the last day the flesh will rise, sins be forgiven, and the flesh continue to live. This change represented a cleansing, not an essential transformation.[121] Eighth, if the substance of humankind had become sin, then Christ could not have taken on true human nature when he was born into the world.[122] Ninth, the Mansfelders had transformed prelapsarian man in

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Irrthumbs, 62–63; "…weil der Mensch die Sünde unnd Erbsünde selbst worden sey/ so werde auch die Erbsünde getaufft/ (denn Mensch und Erbsünde ist ihnen aller dinge eins)." Mencel, *Postilla*, 3.

[120] "Was hie wesentliche ungerechtigkeit/ und wesentliche Sünde ist/ das wird dort/ an jenem tage/ wesentliche Gerechtigkeit sein und werden." The Eislebeners, *Beweis und Erzelung*, 5; "Haben sie auch ungeschewet geschreiben, Das nach dem Evangelio, nicht allein der Sünder, Sondern auch die Sünde zu Gnaden auffgenommen werde…. Denn [Spangenberg] führet zu bestetigung dieser Gottslesterung, etliche Sprüche aus Gottes Wort, welche er nach Sathanische art deutet, wider den einhelligen Verstand, der gantzen waren Kirchen, welche mit gewissem Grunde der Schrifft, dahin schleust, Wie Gott, nicht ein Gott ist, dem Gottlos Wesen gefellet, Als hasse er auch die Sünde, in alle Ewigkeit. Psalm 5. Zach. 8. etc." The Pastorate of Mansfeld, *Abfertigung/ Des Spangenbergischen Irrthumbs*, 63.

[121] "Ist Spangenberg dahin komen, das er geschrieben, das die wesentliche Ungerechtigkeit am Jüngsten tage sol verwandelt werden, in wesentlichen Gerechtigkeit…. Wir aber bekenne in unserem Christlichen Glauben, eine Aufferstehung des Fleisches, nicht der Sünden und Ungerechtigkeit. Denn hie alle Sünde vergeben werden, das Fleische aber sol wider leben, etc." The Pastorate of Mansfeld, *Abfertigung/ Des SpangenbergischenIrrthumbs*, 63–64.

[122] The Eislebeners accused the Mansfelders of arguing that "Christus habe nicht unser armes Fleisch und Blut an sich genomen. Sondern *Carnem alterius Speciei*, Adams Fleisch fur dem fall/ ein ander Fleisch und Blut denn wir haben." Mencel, *Erklerung Der Weinmarischen Bekentnis*, 2; "Das Christus *Carnem alterius speciei*, Adams fleisch fur dem fall angenommen habe." Mencel, *Eine Newe Spangenbergische Bekentnis*, 48; "Der Artickel aber von der waren Menschenwerdunge des Herrn Jhesu Christi/ gibet diesen unterschied nach klere und gewaltiger/ Denn aus der Schrifft/ und der waren Christlichen Kirchen Bekentnis/ und Glauben/ ist es gewis/ Das Jhesus Christus warer Mensch ist/ und Menschliche Natur hat/ wie wir/ aber one Sünde. Daraus ist unwidersprechlich gewis und war/ das man Menschen Natur/ von der Sünden unterscheiden kan und sol." Mencel, *Kurtze verzeichnis*, 8–9; "*Christus assumpsit carnem alterius speciei*. Denn weil unser jetziges armes Fleisch und Blut/ one unterschied/ die vom Teufel gezeuget Sünde selbs ist/ so muss man ein ander Fleisch und Blut suchen/ denn wir armen Menschen nach dem fall haben." Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 38; "Das Christus *Carnem alterius speciei*, Adams Fleisch fur dem Fall angenommen hat." The Eislebeners, *Beweis und Erzelung*, 5; "Haben sie mit Illyrico gestritten, Weil der Mensch mit Leib und Seel, und gantzer Menschlichen Natur, für und an sich selbs, die Sünde selbs worden sey, So habe Christus, nicht unser jtziges armes Fleisch und Blut, annemen können. Sondern, Er habe *Carnem alterius speciei* angenommen, Nemlich,

his entirety into the image of God. But the church teaches that God created man in the divine image, not with regard to his body and soul themselves, but with regard to the righteousness and holiness of the body and soul.[123] Behind this objection was the view that man, in all his substance and characteristics, was not a replica of God. Thus when the image of God was destroyed in the fall, humankind did not lose all prelapsarian substance and characteristics.

Each of these positions, argued the Eislebeners, represented necessary conclusions of the Mansfelders' doctrine of original sin. The Mansfelder clergy, on the contrary, saw these critiques as founded on human reasoning rather than the word of God, the most flagrant example of which was the Eislebeners' contention that original sin was merely an accident. In fact, Mencel and his colleagues attempted to distance themselves from the word *substance*, and even more so, *accident* in their description of the nature of original sin. Like their opponents, they asserted that philosophical reasoning and terminology had no place in the definition of doctrine. Nonetheless, the Mansfelders continued to accuse the Eislebeners of holding the opinion that original sin was an *accident*—and it seems they had a point. For although the superintendent rejected the term *accident*, he found himself in a logical bind that eventually led him to embrace it. Admitting that the Eislebeners had simply taken over the definition proposed by certain theologians from Jena, Mencel explained,

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das heilige Fleisch und Blut, so Adam für dem Fall gehabt hat.... Aber hiewider gleubet, leret, und bekennet, die gantze Christliche Kirche, stracks, rund und richtig, Das Christus, nicht Adams heiliges fleisch und Blut, für dem Fall, Sondern sein und unser armes Fleisch und Blut, nach dem Fall, doch one Sünde, angenommen habe." The Pastorate of Mansfeld, *Abfertigung/ Des SpangenbergischenIrrthumbs*, 64–65; "Daher er [Flacius] auch in den schrecklichen/ Gotteslesterischen Schwarm gefallen/ das er von der Menschwerdung des Herrn Christi geschrieben/ *Christum (in utero virginis Mariae conceptum) non nostram hanc carnem, sed carnem alterius speciei assumsisse*." Mencel, *Postilla*, 3.

[123] "Haben sie iren Schwarm angefangen, mit der Lere, von dem Bilde Gottes, zu beschönen, und haben vielmal klaren deutlichen worten geschrieben, Das der Gantze Mensch Selbs Gottes Bild Gewesen sey.... Die heilige Schrifft bezeuget, das der mensche nach Gottes Bilde geschaffen sey. Was ist nun das anders, den das Göttliche Weisheit und Gerechtigkeit, die auch Gott ist, sich im Menschen bildet, Dadurch wir Gott erkennen, durch welche Gottes Klarheit, sich in uns spiegelt, das ist, das dem Menschen am ersten, als er geschaffen ist. Diese gaben sein gegeben: Recht klar erkentnis Gottes, rechte frucht, recht vertrawen, und dergleichen." The Pastorate of Mansfeld, *Abfertigung/ Des Spangenbergischen Irrthumbs*, 57–58.

> that in the beginning it made us very suspicious that [the Jena Professors] used the word *accident*. For we liked neither the fact that Illyricus used *substance*, nor that they used *accident*. It was our opinion that one could do without both, as they have done to this point in the church and nonetheless can speak out of the Holy Scripture regarding original sin, against all heretics and heresy.[124]

But as Spangenberg once admitted that if original sin was not an accident, it must be a substance, so now Mencel insisted that if it was not a substance, it must be an accident.

> But when we dug a little deeper into the issue we found that the word [*accident*] had been used before in such a controversy and that the two, *substance* and *accident*, are set one against another—as Illyricus and others confirm themselves must be the case. One must set against the word *accident*, the word *substance*, and against the word *substance*, the word *accident*, in the case that one wanted to properly understand each side in this controversy.[125]

This one statement is indicative of the thinking on both sides. Everything must fall into the category either of *substance* or *accident*. In other words, like the Mansfelders, the Eislebeners demonstrated that they were locked into philosophical categories.

In the end the Eislebeners decided on the word *accident* despite the fact that some Gnesio-Lutherans accused them of thereby minimizing

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[124] "das uns anfenglich das sehr stützig gemacht/ das sie das wort Accidens eingefuret. Denn es hat uns keins gefallen/ das Illyricus Substantiam, sie aber Accidens, gebrauchten/ Und ist unser meinung gewesen/ man köndte ir wol beider entraten/ wie ir bisher in die Kirche entrathen/ und nichts desto weniger aus der H. Schrifft notdürfftig von der Erbsünde/ wider alle Ketzer und Ketzerey hat reden können." Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 24.

[125] "Als wir aber auch in deme der sachen nachgeforschet/ haben wir befunden/ das dis wort zuvor in solchem streitte mehr gebraucht/ und eins dem andern/ Substantia und Accidens entgegen gesetzt worden ist. Wie denn Illyricus und andere selbs zeugen/ das es also geschehen müsse. man müsse dem wort Accidens/ das wort Substantia/ und widerumb dem wort Substantia/ das wort Accidens entgegen setzen/ wo man anders eins jeden meinung/ in diesem streite wissen und recht verstehen solle." Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 24. Although Mencel and the Eislebeners had frequently insisted that they did not emply the word *accident* to describe original sin, they did nonetheless on occasion condone, or at least not condemn, its use. "So habe ich auch in vleissiger nachforschung befunden/ das der alte reine Lerer Augustinus/ im streit wider die Manicheer/ so wol als andere/ und zu unseren zeiten/ der trefflich hoch von Luthero gehaltene/ und gerhümte Lerer Urbanus Regius/ und andere mehr/ one Lutheri verdammung und abbruch der warheit/ das wort Accidens gebraucht/ und die Sünde also genennet haben/ Wie keme ich denn darzu/ das ich hierinne frevein/ solche Leute verdammen/ und sie für lautere Ketzer halten solten?" Mencel, *Erklerung Der Weinmarischen Bekentnis*, 16.

the damage done by original sin, diminishing Christ's service in the redemption of humankind, and transforming humankind's evil nature into good. For their part, however, the Eislebeners insisted that they did not employ the word accident as Strigel had, but merely to retain the distinction between human nature and original sin.[126] In the eyes of the Mansfelders, however, this position opened the door to the type of reasoning championed by Strigel.[127]

A careful examination of the Eislebeners' definition of original sin and condemnation of their opponents' views comes down to this simple fact: they believed that a distinction had to be made between the corruption caused by original sin and human nature itself, not in order to defend the concept of free will's role in conversion, but to protect the integrity of a variety of other Christian doctrines. Medieval theologians had argued that original sin was an accident for the same reasons the Eislebeners now did. Although Luther had condemned its use, the Eislebeners (locked into a scholastic conceptual framework) were forced to reassert this view of original sin. But in order to pro-

[126] "Denn was das wort Accidens anlanget/ sehen wir/ das sie mit demselben nichts anders suchen/ noch leren/ denn das Natur und Sünde nicht ein ding sein. Natur und Substantz sind (wie offte gedacht) auch nach dem fall/ Gottes Creaturen und Geschöpffe. Sünde/ damit die Natur anfenglich verderbet ist/ kömpt vom Sathan und Menschen/ und erbet nun von den Eltern Natürlich auff alle Menschen." Mencel, *Erklerung Der Weinmarischen Bekentnis*, 25.

[127] Indeed, on occasion Mencel argued along the lines of the model promoted by Strigel in Weimar. Insisting that the distinction between human nature and the corruption must be kept, he wrote, "Erstlich dessen/ Was an Adam und Eva anfenglich gut geschaffen/ und auch an inen nach dem Fall/ in der aller tieffsten und höchsten verderbung bleiben ist. Und dessen/ was nicht geschaffen/ Sondern an Gottes geschepffe geschehen/ und ergangen ist. Denn das wesen Menschlicher Natur/ das man *ipsam hypostasin Substantiam humanam*, Leibs und der Seelen nennen mag/ das ist ja an Adam/ und Eva blieben. Dieweil wir nicht sagen können/ Adam und Eva sind nicht Menschen bleiben/ haben nicht Menschliche Natur/ Leib und Seele behalten. Dieweil wir auch nicht sagen können/ noch sollen/ das der Sathan des etwas an Adam und Eve newe geschaffen habe." Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 9–10. A little further on, Mencel and his fellow Eislebeners explained more clearly their view that the substance of humankind, as created by God, remained even after the fall. "Und haben/ und behalten wir in unsern augen und hertzen/ diese starcke maximam und gewisse Regel. Wie im fall der ersten Menschen hypostasis, und Substantia naturae humanae, Das wesen Menschlicher Natur/ des Leibes/ und Hertzens/ der Seelen/ nicht verschwunden ist/ wie der Sathan der keines/ oder kein anders/ an derselben stat geschaffen hat/ Wie auch Gott in der Widergeburt/ und letzten Aufferstehung/ keine newe schepffunge anstellet/ noch anstellen wird. Also müsse man für und für/ auff das/ was blieben/ und nicht blieben ist/ im fall der ersten Menschen/ Und das/ was bleiben/ und nicht bleiben wird/ in der aufferstehung/ sehen/ und davon auch unterschiedlich reden/ leren/ halten/ und gleuben." Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 11.

mote their cause, they also employed another group of arguments that took the form of accusations leveled against their opponents. In fact, these attempts to tar the Mansfelders with the brush of heresy by focusing on the wider implications of their position on original sin quickly became the central weapon of their argument.

Finally, it is worth noting that in the *Formula of Concord* (1577), the larger Lutheran world would address the issue of original sin in its very first article, "Concerning Original Sin." Not only were Flacius' and the Mansfelders' positions rejected, but the directive was included that the words *substantia* and *accidens* not be used in sermons delivered to the common man, who did not understand them. However in the schools and among the learned, these terms could be retained to differentiate the essence of thing from that which adheres to it in an "accidental" way.[128] In other words, the authors of the *Formula* basically agreed with the Eislebeners regarding the utility of maintaining the notion of accident in order to distinguish between human nature and original sin. And as events unfolded in Mansfeld and the Eislebeners got the upper hand, they would insist that Mansfelder laity who desired to be reintegrated into the territorial church sign the *Formula of Concord*'s statement on original sin.[129]

Conclusion

What did the theological debates between Flacius and Strigel and between the Mansfelder and Eislebener clerics mean for the laity? Some aspects meant very little, particularly those that had to do with philosophical terminology, Flacius' subdivisions within human nature, and the intellectual history of the church's understanding of original sin. But other facets proved keenly important.

The Mansfelder clerics' position offered a very dim view of humankind, both before and after baptism, one that required complete reliance upon Christ for salvation and shored up the doctrine of justification by faith alone. In comparison with the Eislebener clerics' position, it was rather straightforward, relying on a simple logic based upon diametric oppositions: good and evil, image of God and image of the Devil,

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[128] *Formula of Concord*, Ep. 1.

[129] See chapters four, "The Counts and the Controversy" and seven, "Lay Understandings of Original Sin and Lutheran Theology."

the complete inefficacy of human will and the complete reliance upon Christ. Moreover it addressed these issues in concrete, material terms. Human nature was a substance that could be good or evil. Finally, a straightforward reading of the Scripture and Luther seemed to support the Mansfelder definition of original sin, giving that group not only the advantage of a clear, concrete definition, but also the opportunity to demonstrate from where their views came, and upon what authority they rested.

The Eislebeners were fighting more of an uphill battle in their efforts to articulate their own views on original sin to the laity. Although they did not take as dim of view of humankind, their argument relied upon a secondary issue—namely the existence of a distinction between human nature and original sin. Moreover their own definition of original sin proved more abstract than that of the Mansfelder clerics. Making their task even more difficult was the relative dearth of biblical verses and citations from Luther that spoke directly either to their understanding of original sin or to their argument for a division between human nature and original sin. And while the Eislebener position did protect basic Christian doctrines, such as the full humanity of Christ and the inability of the Devil to create, none of them were identifiable as uniquely Lutheran. For this reason, they had less power to incite partisanship or appeal to the laity's self-understanding as Lutherans. But the Eislebener clerics did have one significant advantage: the notion that "sin is a substance" had been deemed heterodox 1,200 years earlier, so it was easy to insist that their opponents were heretics.

By the time the controversy reached the laity, it had ballooned into two competing bundles of arguments, so that when the clerics on each side made their case to their parishioners, they had a range of ideas and claims from which to choose. Although no evidence exists that either group of clerics ever produced formal strategies regarding which components of their arguments would appeal most effectively to their parishioners, favorites did emerge. Each side played to its advantages and strengths, while avoiding its weaknesses. Moreover, they paired the content of their message with the variety of media and literary forms at their disposal, a combination that resulted in the creation of a complex strategy by which to reach their parishioners, the subject of chapter three.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PASTORS AND THEIR PARISHIONERS[1]

Since the goal of this monograph is to use doctrinal conflict as a window onto lay religiosity, it is not only important to understand the multifaceted and intricate sets of competing ideas held by the clergy, but to analyze how these churchmen presented their cases to their parishioners. What did each side emphasize, moderate, simplify, or exclude altogether? How did they tailor their versions to resonate with their parishioners? By the late sixteenth century, both groups of churchmen had fifty years of Protestant pedagogical experience in a variety of oral and literary genres upon which to draw. A careful analysis of their educational strategies demonstrates that they used this knowledge to shape and deliver a message they deemed attractive to the laity.

But there is danger in such an approach, because while it articulates relevant information about the clergy's efforts to reach the laity, it also assumes that clerical strategies were built upon expediency, gaining the maximum number of converts. As will become apparent, this was not their only concern. It is necessary, then, to pause for a moment and examine some of the broader issues that shaped the clerics' interactions with their parishioners, such as how each group of churchmen understood the role of the laity within the church, and whether they thought that a sophisticated understanding of theology was necessary or even possible for their parishioners. In their distinct approaches to interpreting the Scriptures and Luther's writings, each group of clerics has already intimated divergent positions on these questions, but as will become clear, their views were not merely trotted out to accentuate advantages and limit liabilities during the controversy. Rather they were part of a long-running discussion that had its roots in the early Reformation about the laity's role in the church. When lay reaction to the doctrinal controversy is discussed later in this work, it will become apparent that this issue, the nature of lay participation in the church,

[1] Parts of this chapter have been previously published in Robert Christman, "Competing Clerical Efforts to Secure Lay Support in the Flacian Controversy over Original Sin," *Dutch Review of Church History* 85 (2005), 225–238.

was a key element in the religiosity of many parishioners. Many lay people attempted to live up to (or down to) the expectations of their pastors in this regard.

The purpose of this chapter, then, is to examine and evaluate the communications of each group of clerics with the laity. First the Mansfelders' notion of the lucidity of Scripture and its influence on their understanding of the laity's role in the church will be addressed, followed by an evaluation of the resultant content and methods employed to reach and convince their parishioners. Thereafter the chapter will turn to the Eislebeners, investigating their opinion of lay ability to understand Scripture and doctrine, and how this understanding influenced the content of the Eislebeners' message and the means by which they articulated it. In the process, two distinct ecclesiologies will emerge, key components in the laity's perception of its own religiosity.

"One should not shut the church door to the laity": The Mansfelders and the Laity

When Matthias Flacius Illyircus articulated his understanding of original sin at Weimar, he was not only attempting to define proper orthodox doctrine, but to critique his opponent's entire approach to theology. To this end, he consciously rejected a philosophically-based definition of man only later, as he claimed, to translate the language of Scripture and the writings of Luther into a sort of philosophical shorthand. But even then he claimed he had merely allowed Scripture and Luther to speak without glosses. All this was an attempt to stave off the effects of the new Lutheran orthodoxy, to break from philosophical terminology, categories, and human reason in the exegesis of Scripture.

Although ultimately unsuccessful, his efforts were well received by the Mansfelder clerics and their lay followers, who held the view that Scripture (and Luther's writings) was easily comprehensible to the heart enlivened by faith.[2] This belief coincided with their notions regarding who had access to its meaning. One need only attune one's

[2] The following section is based primarily upon the thought of Spangenberg, for among the Mansfelders, he produced by far the most titles. However, in the writings of his fellow Mansfelders devoted specifically to the issue of original sin, his program is also apparent.

ear to the language of the Scriptures, a point Cyriakus Spangenberg had made already in 1560 more than a decade prior to controversy.

> Unfortunately it has come to the point in our day that the honorable and Christian method of speaking about morals and divine things has very much deteriorated, and the language of the old Adam, born in us by nature, has come into wide use. But many individuals do not realize that this [language of the old Adam] is shameful, unrighteous, and godless because the flesh likes it, it rings well in the ears, and it agrees marvelously with reason, philosophy, and the wisdom of the world.... But because we are children of the kingdom of heaven, we should develop the habit of speaking a heavenly language and become accustomed to it, duly using it as children of God. But the wise people of this world do not like that language, nor is it possible that they would ever consider it a positive thing, understand its goals and methods, admit that it is good—if it does not go along with their objectives and contributions—nor give it a place or allow it into divine issues and affairs.[3]

Heavenly language, the language of Scripture, was to be used by the children of God. The language of the unregenerate that resonated with the flesh and aligned itself easily and happily with human reason and philosophy was to be avoided. Moreover, most intellectuals saw no value in this celestial dialect because they could not understand it. But Luther had used this language of Scripture, argued the Mansfelders, so that God had not only provided the Reformer with a keen understanding of the proper doctrine of justification, "but He had also put the words into [Luther's] mouth, so that he was able to speak regarding spiritual things, not with words that human wisdom can teach, but with words that the Holy Ghost teaches."[4] Moreover Luther did this in

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[3] "Dieweil es leider bei unsern Zeiten nun dahin kommen ist, daß erbarliche und christliche Art, von Tugend und göttlichen Sachen zu reden, sehr gefallen, und die alten Adamsprache, uns von Natur angeboren, gewaltiglich in Brauch kommt, aber von wenig Leuten, wie schändlich, unrecht und gottlos solches gethan sei, bedacht wird—den weil es dem Fleische gefällt und vor den Ohren ziemlich klinget, auch mit der Vernunft, Philosophie und der Welt Weisheit sehr fein übereinstimmt.... Denn weil wir Kinder des Himmelreichs sind, sollen wir auch der himmlischen Sprache gewohnen und uns zu derselben, als frommen Gottes-Kindern gebühret, gewöhnen, obgleich dieselbige Sprache den Weisen dieser Welt nicht gefället, auch unmöglich ist, daß sie an der Sprache Gefallen tragen sollten, deß Willen und Werk sie nicht erkennen, noch gut sein lassen, wo er ihren Willen und Mitwirkung nicht auch in höchsten göttlichen Sachen und Händeln Platz gönnet und einräumet." Spangenberg, *Elegantiarum Veteris Adami Decades Sex*, 1.

[4] "sondern ihm auch darzu die Wort in Mund gelegt/ das er von Geistlichen Sachen reden kundte/ nicht mit worten/ welche Menschliche weisheit leren kan/ sondern mit Worten/ die der Heilige Geist leret." Cyriakus Spangenberg, *Warhafftiger Bericht/ von*

good, proper German, which had never been done before. Other theologians, continued Spangenberg, lacked something found in Luther's writings, for they take things from Christ's and Adam's pot, that is, they mix in human wisdom so that black and white become gray. In the end, only the simple, silly folk can see, as Christ said, "Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."[5] As a result, when the Mansfelders approached the Scriptures, their goal was to apply both Luther's doctrine and a "Lutheran" language, reasoning, and the means of expression, dual aspects of the Reformer's legacy that they considered inseparable.[6]

But their conception of "the language of Scripture" also had broad implications for their understanding of the laity and its role in the church, for it influenced how one discussed Scripture, who had access to its meaning, who was responsible for articulating and defending orthodox theology, and what these responsibilities entailed. In short, it provided the point of departure for Spangenberg's and his colleagues'

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den Wolthathen/ die Gott/ durch D. Martin Luther/ seligen/ fürnemblich Deutschlande erzeigt/ und von der schendlichen groben Undanckbarkeit/ fur solche grosse Gaben. (Jena: Thomas Rebart, 1561), 14; The Mansfelders affirmed this view throughout the controversy over original sin, as exemplified by the Mansfelder theologian Emericus Sylvius. "Denn Lutherus hat von der Erbsünde nit gelehret/ nach seinem eygen gutdüncken und hohem verstande/ auch nicht auß der Philosophia oder Dialectica/ noch auß der Schul Secretarynten und Sophisten Büchern/ Ob er gleich darinnen wol erfahren unnd belesen gewesen: Denn diese verborgenen Warheyt/ und heymliche Weyßheit/ Wie David diese Lehre Psal. 51 nennet/ findet man in keinen Büchern/ denn allein in der Bibel: Darumb bekennet auch Lutherus in der Außlegung deß 51 Psalms/ und sagt. Ich kan es mit meinem eygen Exempel bezeugen/ das ich diese Lehre: Da ich schon vil Jar ein Doctor der H. Schrifft gewesen war/ noch nicht wuste/ Denn man machete zu derselben zeyt manchen zum Doctor Theologie der Bibel nie gesehen/ oder doch nicht mit fleiß ein mal durch lesen hatte. Nun ist aber der Artickel von der Erbsünde/ der fürnembste Artickel einer/ davon die Menschliche vernunfft nichts weiß (sagt Lutherus an gedachtem ort) man lehrnet in aber auß Gottes wort..... Demnach hat Lutherus auch inn beschreibung der Erbsünde/ mit seinen gedancken/ noch der Hochgelahrten Schullehrer gutdüncken/ noch einigen Menschen folgen wollen: sondern nur nach der Schrifft sich gerichtet. Den weil die Erbsünde/ so gar eine tieffe/ böse verderbung der Natur ist/ (wie die Schmalkaldischen Artickel zeugen) Das sie keine Vernunfft nicht kennet: Sondern muß auß der Schrifft offenbarung geglaubt werden/ Psal. 51. Rom. 5. Exod. 33. Gen. 3 etc. So sagt Lutherus/ uber den 51. Psalm. Sylvius, *Beweyß/ Das Magister Cyriakus Spangenberg*, 1–2.

[5] Spangenberg, *Warhafftiger Bericht*, 10–11.

[6] For Luther on the issue of "new" or "heavenly" language, see his later disputations, especially *Die Disputation de divinitate et humanitate Christi*, particularly theses 20–24, *WA* 39/2:92–121; Paul Hinlicky, "Luther's New Language of the Spirit: Trinitarian Theology as Critical Dogmatics," in Paul Hinlicky, ed., *The Substance of Faith: Luther's Doctrinal Theology for Today* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 131–190; and Graham White, *Luther as Nominalist: A Study of the Logical Methods used in Martin Luther's Disputations in Light of their Medieval Background* (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Society, 1994), 299–348.

entire approach to their pastoral mission. Their job, they believed, was not to render the high theology of the academy into the language of the masses, but to preach the Gospel and proper doctrine in a straightforward manner. If it was faith rather than human reason that grasped doctrinal truths, then anyone with faith, regardless of education, social status, and occupation would recognize proper belief. It was a very egalitarian view, one that originated in Luther's concept of "the priesthood of all believers." The principal elements of this program for understanding Scripture and engaging in theology were as follows:

First and foundational was an absolute belief in the clarity of Scriptures (and the writings of Luther), which provided the means to faith. Moreover, faith itself was not a product of the intellect, but "comes via the clear, bright, certain word of God and the Holy Scriptures, so that it is not thoughts, but a surefire unmovable foundation upon which one can stand with good conscience."[7] Ability to understand the Scriptures did not depend on reasoning, calculation, or the capacity to follow complex argumentation. In fact, in order to attain unshakable certainty of belief, the true Christian must repudiate these processes in favor of pondering the clear word of God.

Second, and complimentary to this position, was a deep distrust of the intellect and its champions, suspicions that appeared already in the early 1560s when Spangenberg began to inveigh against the encroachment of "philosophy" and "sophism" into the world of theology. Warning the faithful against the siren song of reason, he wrote, "And in case our intellect wants to lead us down the wrong path…then we must not follow it nor give it free reign. Rather we must imprison all intellect under the obedience of Christ. (2 Corinthians 10)."[8] During the controversy over original sin, this skepticism concerning the reliability of human reason as a tool for understanding the Scriptures developed into full-blown anti-intellectualism.[9] In a 1569 sermon preached on

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[7] "Sondern nach klaren, hellen, gewissen Worten Gottes und h. Schrift geschehen soll, damit es nicht Gedanken, sondern gewisser, unbeweglicher Grund sei, darauf man mit gutem Gewissen bleiben und beruhen könne." Spangenberg, *Elegantiarum Veteris Adami Decades Sex*, 33.

[8] "Und im Fall, daß unser Verstand den Holzweg gehen wollt…so müssen wir ihm darinnen nicht nachhängen, noch seinen freien Lauf lassen, sondern allen Verstand und Vernunft gefangen nehmen unter den Gehorsam Christi, 2. Corinth. 10." Spangenberg, *Elegantiarum Veteris Adami Decades Sex*, 27–28.

[9] Spangenberg insisted on the rejection of reason when attempting to comprehend original sin. "Ob nue dieses wol wunderlich und seltzam lautet/ in den Ohren der vernunfft/ das man den gantzen naturlichen Menschen also gar for Gott zur sunde machet/ und dafur ausruffet/ so sollen sich doch frome Christen solches nicht ergern

the hymn, "All Mankind Fell through Adam's Fall,"[10] Spangenberg told his parishioners the following story.

> Once in a certain place when this hymn was sung there was a great and learned professor from a renowned university who said, "It was too often said that human nature and essence are entirely corrupt, because there are still some natural inclinations and inner powers that in and of themselves are not evil or entirely and completely corrupted." But this intellectual revealed the fact that he had absolutely no understanding of the article on original sin.[11]

Peter Trewer, another Mansfelder pastor, put it more succinctly. The intellectuals were everywhere spouting their delusional opinions, for no one wanted to admit to himself that he was sin and Christ alone was righteousness. And therefore "With the intellectuals, one does well to stick to the accurate old saying, 'The learned, the misguided.'"[12]

The third element of the Mansfelders' program was the belief that if the intellectual was blind to the Gospel, then the opposite was also true: the simple Christian could not only understand the Scriptures, but possessed the tools and ability to judge doctrinal controversies; he or she need only apply the lessons of the catechism. Already during the doctrinal debates of the 1560s Spangenberg used everyday examples to convince his parishioners that the committed Christian could understand proper doctrine for, he argued, an experienced handworker can

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lassen/ sintemal es die heilige schrifft selbst thut/ und alles unter die sunde beschleusset." Spangenberg, *Erklerung M. Cyriaci Spangenbergs*, 53.

[10] "Durch Adams Fall ist ganz verderbt" was written by Lazarus Spengler (1479–1534), the German lay leader of the Reformation and municipal secretary of the free imperial city of Nuremberg. The hymn had an added pedagogical advantage for Spangenberg because a layman composed it.

[11] "Es ward ein mal dieser Psalm gesungen/ an einem ort/ Da sagte ein grosser und gelarter Professor/ aus einer hohen Schule: Es were zu viel geredt/ Das Menschliche Natur und Wesen/ solte gantz verderbet sein/ Denn es weren ja noch etliche natürliche Neigungen/ und innerliche Krefften/ an ihnen selbst nicht böse/ noch so gantz und gar verderbet. Aber damit gab dieser Hochgelarte an tag/ das er den Artickel/ von der Erbsünde/ noch gar nicht verstund." Spangenberg, *Cithara Lutheri*, 96–97. Elsewhere Spangenberg uses this hymn again to warn his readers about the dangers of falling prey to human reason. "Dieweil denn beyde Artickel/ in diesem Liede/ so fein einfeltig/ recht und gründlich erkleret werden/ sol es uns auch darumb dester lieber sein/ und sollen frome Hertzen auch in die einfalt bleiben/ und sich Philosophische Disputationen/ und Absurda Rationis/ des etwan/ nach der Vernunft meinung/ ungereimet ding daraus folgen möchte/ nicht irre machen lassen/ Denn es ist nicht gefahr dabey/ wenn man die Glaubens Artickel beginnet Disputierisch zu machen/ Da man doch einfeltig/ dem Wort und der Schrift folgen solte." Spangenberg, *Deutliche und nützliche erklerung*, 15.

[12] "Mit den andern hochgelarten wirds wol bey dem alten und waren sprichwort bleiben: Die gelarten, die verkarten." Trewer, *Dialogus ein Gesprech*, 18.

easily distinguish between quality and shoddy workmanship; a wayfarer soon learns the best routes to travel and inns to stay in:

> So how can a person who values the Gospel and wants to be a good Christian then thoughtlessly blurt out, "Because there is discord and disunity among the teachers, I cannot understand from their sermons who is right and who is wrong"? [Such a statement] means that you have failed yourself and demonstrated to all that either you have not learned your catechism, or you have not understood how it should be properly applied.[13]

Employing the familiar imagery of artisan life and burgeoning capitalism, Spangenberg urged his parishioners to develop an interest in the debates plaguing the Lutherans, a message underscored during the controversy over original sin when he explained,

> When we speak about the confession of Christian churches, we do not mean only the highly educated, exalted doctors, universities, and such reputable people. Rather we are referring to all those who understand God, believers, Christians from whatever rank in society they come.... And why should one shut the church door to the laity or take away the power to judge doctrine, which Christ himself gave them when he said, "Beware of false prophets?"[14]

Throughout the controversy over original sin, Spangenberg and his cohorts would continue to appeal to their parishioners to make their own decisions.[15] He dismissed the complaints of the Eislebener clerics

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[13] "Und ein Mensch, der sich des Evangeliums rühmet und ein gut Christe sein will, soll so unbedächtig herausfahren und sagen, weil zwischen den Lehrern Zwietracht und Uneinigkeit ist, kann ich mich nicht in ihre Predigten schicken noch wissen, wer Recht oder Unrecht habe. Das heißet sich ja nur fein selbst verrathen und an Tag geben, daß man den Katechismus entweder nicht gelernet habe, oder deselben wenig wahrgenommen, wie man sein recht gebrachen möge." Spangenberg, *Elegantiarum Veteris Adami Decades Sex*, 18–19.

[14] "Wenn wir aber von Bekentnis der Christlichen Kirchen sagen, so meinen wir nicht darmit alleine die Hochgelerten, grossen Doctors, hohe Schulen, und dergleichen ansehenliche Leute, Sondern in gemeine, alle Gottsverstendige, gleubige, Christen wes Standes die auch sein mögen.... Und warumb solte man die Christlichen Layen, von der Kirche aussschliessen, oder inen die macht von allerley Lere zu urtheiling, absprechen die inen doch Christus selbs gegeben, da er sage: Sehet euch für, für falschen Propheten, etc." Spangenberg, *Eine Predigte Von der Sünde*, 24.

[15] For example, "Ob nu dieses eine Manicheische Lere sey/ das Man mit Lutheri Worten und meinung sagt/ Erbsünde sey die verderbte Natur und wesen/ und ob jemand um solcher Lere willen/ billich für einen falschen Lerer verdampt werde/ Bitten wir alle Fromme Christen/ Wes Standes die auch sein mögen/ Sie wollen als unsers Herrn Jesu Christi liebe Kirche/ und als rechte Gliedmas der selben/ nach der Schrifft Regel/ davon ire meinung sagen/ und der Warheit Zeugnis geben/ Wie sie one dar für Gott allezeit und jetzundt auff diesmal auch (unser Christlichen Billichen

who opposed allowing the laity access to the debate with the observation that "this sounds like the papists who were deeply troubled when the Bible was translated into good German for the laity."[16]

It seems that in numerous cases the Mansfelders were fighting an uphill battle, as their own words indicate that many lay folk felt such controversies to be the silly wrangling of hairsplitting theologians. The Mansfelders' strategy to reach these uninterested people was to mock them, and Spangenberg once suggested that "it is a shame that such people did not live in Adam's times. For they could well have given the silly Lord God better advice than he arrived at Himself, namely that He could have compromised and made friendship and conciliation between the serpent and the seed of the woman."[17] Thus the cleric praised those parishioners who engaged in the controversies as true children of God, while condemning those who sat on the sidelines or advocated compromise as defiant of divine injunctions.

A fourth aspect of the Mansfelders program for the laity was to insist that under no circumstances could a true Christian abdicate this God-given responsibility to judge doctrine. To those who argued that theology was best left to the experts, Spangenberg replied,

> For, because all Christians are regal priests of Christ and at all times must be responsible and prepared to give account to everyone upon request, as our hope, faith, and the foundations of our religion demand, how would it be when you respond with such a shameful answer and say: "Well, I have no idea. I'm no theologian. I can't even begin to understand the controversial articles. They are priests' games. And as Pilate said, 'What is Truth?'" For true Christians who have been aware the Gospel for a long time, such an answer is unbecoming.[18]

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bitte nach) uns/ vermöge der Regel der Liebe/ schuld sind." The Mansfelders, *Zwo hochnotwendige Fragen*, 7–8; and again, "…und fragen auffs aller freundlichst/ bitten auch auffs aller Christlichste/ die liebe Kirche Gottes/ und alle frome Christen/ fein rund heraus zusagen/ und zu urtheilen/ Ob D. Martinus Luther/ Heyliger und Seliger gedechtnus/ in diesem Stücke Manicheisch geleret…." The Mansfelders, *Zwo hochnotwendige Fragen*, 5.

[16] "Es kommt diese Art zu reden von den Papisten her, welche auch nicht gerne gesehen, das man die Bibel in gutem Deutsch den Laien vorgelegt hat." Spangenberg, *Elegantiarum Veteris Adami Decades Sex*, 57–58.

[17] Immer Schade ist's, daß diese Leute nicht zu Adams Zeiten gelebt haben, die hätten doch dem albern Herrn Gott einen bessern Rath geben können denn er bei sich selbst gefunden, also nämlich, daß er hätte Freundschaft gemacht und Vergleichung angestellet zwischen der Schlange und des Weibes Samen." Spangenberg, *Elegantiarum Veteris Adami Decades Sex*, 80.

[18] "Denn weil alle Christen ein königliches Priestertum Christi sind und allezeit erbötig und bereit sein sollen zur Verantwortung Jedermann, der unserer Hoffnung,

As members of the "royal priesthood," Christians should relinquish the obligation to define proper faith neither to those possessing the title of theologian,[19] nor to the politicians. When Christ asks on Judgment Day why you thoughtlessly followed the wishes of your temporal lord in doctrinal matters, thundered Spangenberg, it will not help to mutter, "'Indeed, I will let my lord answer, for I haven't thought about the issue.' Rather the answer will be, 'You have done according to your lord's command, now receive his reward.'"[20] And if the temporal authorities forbade the public confession of faith, such a command was motivated by sin and the true Christian was obligated to ignore it.[21]

Indeed a good Christian should be prepared to give a public account of his faith at all times, a point Spangenberg made in no uncertain terms in a 1560 treatise entitled *Some Momentous and Important Reasons why each Christian, Regardless of his Station, is Required and Duty-Bound at all Times, but especially now, to Give a Public Confession of His Belief and Teaching Orally, and if he is Capable, in Writing.*

Glaubens, und Religions Grund fordert, denselben eine solche schimpfliche Antwort zu geben und zu sagen: Ei, es gehet mich nichts an; ich bin kein Theologus; ich will mit den streitigen Artickeln nichts zu schaffen haben; es ist Pfafferei und wie Pilatus sprach: 'Was ist Wahrheit?' Solche Reden wollen wahrlich Christenleuten die sich des Evangelii lange Zeit gerühmet haben nicht geziemen." Spangenberg, *Elegantiarum Veteris Adami Decades Sex*, 23.

[19] "Denn obwol alle Christen nicht nach dem Beruf und Amt der Kirchenregierung Theologen sind, so sind sie doch gleichwol alle und sollen alle sein rechtschaffenen Theologen, das ist Gottverständige Leute, die von Gott und göttlichen Händeln Bescheid geben können denen, die sie (sonderlich wenn sie die Rotten solche Verwirrung einführen) darum fragen und bitten." Spangenberg, *Elegantiarum Veteris Adami Decades Sex*, 23.

[20] "Ei, ich laß meinen Herrn verantworten, ich habe mich um die Sache nicht bekümmert, sondern wird heißen: Hast du mit deinem Herrn gleiche Arbeit gethan, so nimm auch mit ihm gleichen Lohn." Spangenberg, *Elegantiarum Veteris Adami Decades Sex*, 60–61.

[21] "Aus Gott können solche ursachen nicht sein/ auch nicht aus dem Glauben/ an welchem die Bekentnis so gnaw henget/ das sie voneinander nicht können getrennet werden. Was nu nicht aus dem Glauben gehet/ das ist Sünde/ Rom. 14. Und umb Sünde willen/ des Glaubens früchte unterlassen/ wird kein Christ fur recht erkennen. Und da auch die hohe Oberkeit/ die offentliche bekentnis der warheit verbieten würde/ köndte man ir nich gehorsamen/ denn es ligt uns Gottes gebot und unser beruff im wege/ und da richtet nu selbst/ ob es fur Gott recht sey/ das man den Menschen mehr gehorche/ denn Gott/ wie Petrus und Joannes sagen Actorum am vierden." Cyriakus Spangenberg, *Etliche Hohe/ und wichtige Ursachen/ worumb ein jglicher Christ/ wes Standes er auch ist/ schuldig und pflichtig sey zu jeder zeit/ Sonderliche aber jtzt/ seines glaubens lere offentliche Bekentnis zu thun/ mündlich/ und da ers vermag auch Schrifftlich* (Eisleben: Urban Gaubisch, 1560), 14; see also Robert Kolb, *Confessing the Faith: Reformers Define the Church, 1530–1580* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991), esp. 120–127.

Lamenting the fact that the Mansfeld church had failed to establish official positions on some of the controversial doctrines of the period, Spangenberg concluded that, "for this reason, the common man does nothing wrong when he openly offers his confession against all the recently established sects."[22] Particularly in light of the shortcomings of the clergy, the commoners must take up this task. What is more, for Spangenberg, the simple act of stating one's faith was a measure of the vitality of that faith for, "We and all other true Christians should give…confession in order to bear witness to our faith. For if our faith is right, so we will not keep silent, nor will we hide or hold it back. If we keep silent and we are ashamed to confess our faith, it is clearly not true faith."[23]

The final element of the Mansfelders program for the laity was that having once publicly articulated his faith, the simple Christian must never waver, regardless of the consequences. A true Christian will concur with Luther when he says, "In the name of God, we are so overly proud, brave, and defiant that we will not budge one finger's breadth on account of all the angels in heaven, the gates of hell, one hundred emperors, and a thousand popes, or even the whole world."[24] And so the Christian must be prepared for hardship and the cross. Indeed, persecution is the sign of a vital faith, for without it, the gospel is undoubtedly being misused.[25]

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[22] "…thet derhalben auch ein gemeiner man nicht unrecht/ wenn er sein bekentnis offentlich thet/ wider alle newlich erstande Secten." Spangenberg, *Etliche Hohe/ und wichtige Ursachen*, 34.

[23] "Soll von uns und allen anderen waren Christen…bekentnis geschehen/ unsern Glauben damit zubezeugen. Denn ist unser glaube rechtschaffen/ so werden wir nicht schweigen/ noch denselben bergen und verhalten. Schweigen wir aber/ und schemen wir uns unsern glauben zubekennen/ so ists furwar noch nicht rechter glauben." Spangenberg, *Etliche Hohe/ und wichtige Ursachen*, 14.

[24] "Wir sind in Gottes Namen so über die Maßen stoltz, muthig und trotzig, das wir weder allen himmlischen Engeln noch allen höllischen Pforten etc. noch 100 Kaisern noch tausend Päpsten noch endlich auch der ganzen Welt nicht einen einigen Finger breit weichen wollen." Spangenberg, *Elegantiarum Veteris Adami Decades Sex*, 41.

[25] "Das hat der Herr Christus selbst zuvor gesagt/ damit nichts gedechte/ es geschehe ohne alles gefehr/ Johan. 15. So euch die welt hasset/ so wisset/ das sie mich vor euch gehasset hat. Sie werden euch solchs alle thun/ umb meines namen willen/ Joan. 16. Sie werden euch in Bann thun. Aber solchs habe ich zu euch gered/ auff das/ wenn die zeit komen wird/ das ir dran gedencket/ das ich euch gesaget habe. Dieses sollen sie/ so Christ sein wollen/ wissen/ und sich darzu bereitten/ und darein ergeben/ oder des Evangelions welchs ein wort des Creutzes ist müssig gehen/ und nicht desselben zum deckel fleischlicher freiheit misbrauchen/ denn es heisset/ So wir mit leiden/ so werden wir auch mit zur Herligkeit erhaben werden, Rom. 8." Spangenberg, *Etliche Hohe/ und wichtige Ursachen*, 16.

By the early 1560s, Spangenberg had already taken an approach to Scripture that allowed all Christians access to doctrinal debates and responsibility for judging them. Although his program descended directly from the Lutheran doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and was, therefore, at least implicitly advocated by all adherents of the Augsburg Confession, Spangenberg placed a particular emphasis on it. Prior to the controversy over original sin, many of the other pastors and theologians in the territory of Mansfeld appear to have been of the same mind, as there is no sign of protest from them during the 1560s when Spangenberg first articulated these views. But to a greater degree than his opponents, his notion of the clarity of Scripture and the role of the laity in doctrinal debate influenced his position regarding original sin and the way in which he presented it to the laity. His belief in the simplicity of the Scriptures when read by the heart of faith, led him to conclude that when they spoke of a substantial and essential change in humankind as a result of the fall into sin, that is exactly what they meant. If philosophical terminology could not explain the transformation, it must bow to the Scriptures. This understanding of the Scriptures provided the basis for his decision to present the controversy to the laity, and along with the other Mansfelder pastors, to develop specific methods for doing so.

The Mansfelders' Strategy to Reach the Laity

In light of their views on Scripture and the laity, it should come as no surprise that Spangenberg and the Mansfelders made a concerted effort to include the commoners in the controversy over original sin. They employed various media, producing pamphlets in the vernacular, composing catechisms that directly addressed the issue of original sin, preaching and printing sermons on the topic, and even making modest attempts to explain their views through the medium of hymns. In each case they made a conscious effort to "speak the language" of their parishioners, to substantiate their views with authoritative documents familiar to the people, and to connect their position to Luther's. By means of this strategy, the Mansfelders appealed to parishioners across the spectrum of literacy.

Since its earliest days, among the most popular methods of relaying the Reformation message had been the pamphlet, and now the Mansfelders produced a mountain of such works on the topic of

original sin. Written in the vernacular, they made little distinction between pamphlets aimed at fellow clerics and those directed at the laity. In other words, for them, the entire debate was open to all. In fact, many of these works were part of a larger dialogue in which clerics responded to one another's critique, reacting against specific pamphlets authored by their enemies in a discourse available to anyone with the ability and interest to follow it. As the territory's printing presses churned out pamphlets for both sides, the Mansfelder pastors encouraged their parishioners to read them[26] and there is good evidence that many lay folk did.[27] The Mansfelders also designed some pamphlets specifically for the 'simple' folk, such as Spangenberg's *Explanation of Magister Cyriakus Spangenberg Regarding Original Sin, Composed for the Simple Folk, at the Desire and Request of many Pious Christians*,[28] or responded to the content of one another's pamphlets in their sermons, thereby providing the illiterate with a degree of access.[29]

Examples of clerics urging the laity to read raise the important and difficult question of literacy rates. Although no study has been done on the territory of Mansfeld in the early modern period, there are some indications that literacy rates, especially in Eisleben and Tal Mansfeld, may have been quite high. Since Luther's time, Eisleben had been home to a major Latin school with an enrollment of up to 700 students taught by between seven and ten teachers in the 1560s.[30] Furthermore, every church had a schoolmaster for the boys' school, and parish visitation records often mention local girls' schools as

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[26] For example, in a sermon preached in July 1572, the Tal Mansfeld pastor Anthonius Cruger mentioned a particular pamphlet, "… und vermanete die leute dasselbige ja fleissig zulesen." Spangenberg, *Historia*, 108; Spangenberg also repeatedly urged his parishioners to read, writing that at one point he listed for them Luther's church postil, prayer book, catechism, preface to Romans, and commentary on Psalm 51, "und dieselbigen zulesen vermanet." Spangenberg, *Historia*, 117; In a sermon on original sin he suggested, "[Ich] habe sunst mein Bekentnis kurtz gefasset/ in druck geben/ kan man umb 3. oder 4. Pfenning keuffen/ das bitte Ich wolle man lesen/ und nicht so liederlich unerhöreter und unerkanter sachen/ Mich für einen so bösen Ketzer verurteilen." Spangenberg, *Eine Predigte Von der Sünde*, 28.

[27] See chapter 7, "Lay Understandings of Original Sin and Lutheran Theology."

[28] Spangenberg, *Erklerung M. Cyriaci Spangenbergs*. On more than one occasion, Spangenberg mentions writing specifically for the simple folk. "Gleicher gestalt liese Ich auch den obgedachten kurtzen/ für die einfeltigen/ etc. wider umbdrücken." Spangenberg, *Historia*, 33; "Und Ich denn dieselbigen richtig/ Gottes wort und den Schriften gemes befunden/ habe ich für nutze und nötig geachtet/ das sie den einfaltigen zum bericht gedrucket werden möchten." Spangenberg, *Historia*, 31.

[29] See my section on the sermons that follows.

[30] Krumhaar, *Die Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 271 and 355.

well. In Tal Mansfeld, even children slated for careers in the mining industry attended school until the age of 13 or 14.[31] Moreover, Robert Scribner has demonstrated the presence other types of "literacy" in the sixteenth century,[32] and two forms that appear to have been in play in Mansfeld were rote memorization (most often of catechisms) and listening to other individuals reading or sermonizing.[33]

The most unique genre employed by the Mansfelders to reach commoners, however, was the catechism, two of which they published specifically on the question of original sin. Johann Wincke, chaplain at the city church in Tal Mansfeld whose responsibilities included educating the children, composed the first. Circulating in manuscript form[34] already in the summer of 1572, it was published a year later in an expanded and slightly altered form. In its printed incarnation, Wincke sharpened the polemical language and added an entire second half that responded specifically to the critiques leveled by the Eislebeners.[35] In the foreword he wrote for Wincke's catechism, Spangenberg noted that the work had been produced to protect the children and common folk from the false teaching of the accidenters.[36] Written in question-and-answer form, the catechism first addressed the history of the creation and the fall into sin before turning to original sin. The questions and responses included many references to the Scriptures and Luther, and as with the Mansfelders' other writings, Wincke invoked the

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[31] Etzrodt and Kronenberg, *Hirsch: Geschichte eines Mansfelder Geschlechts*, 34.

[32] Robert Scribner, *For the Sake of the Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda in the German Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

[33] In Mansfeld all children were required to memorize their catechisms by heart. In fact, in spring of 1571 the pastorate of Eisleben, led by Superintendent Mencel, issued a command that the territory's clergymen re-dedicate themselves to teaching the catechism and preaching sermons on it. The command further stated that no parishioner was to receive the Eucharist, stand as a godparent, or get married who had not demonstrated adequate knowledge of the catechism. Parents of children who refused to learn their catechisms were to deny food to their offspring until they changed their attitudes. Hieronymus Mencel, "Cirkularschreiben über die Handhabung des Katechismusunterrichtes vom März 1571," Hermann Größler, ed. "Zwei Beiträge zur Kirchen- und Reformationsgeschichte der Grafschaft Mansfeld," *Zeitschrift des Harz-Vereins für Geschichte und Alterthumskunde* 16 (1883): 79–82.

[34] A copy of the manuscript may be found in Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 830, fols. 23v–40r. It is entitled, "Was in Julio dieses 1572 Jars da der streidt von der Erbsünde, mit gewaldt daher drangk, In der Kirchenn Im Thall Manßfeldt, mit den Kinderlein davon auß und nach Gottes wordt ist gehandeldt wordenn."

[35] Wincke, *Kurtze und einfaltige Fragen*.

[36] "Das man aber den Kindern und gemeinen Völcklin/ in dieser Kirchen solche Fragen fürgelegt/ hat sich daher verursachet/ das man damit der falschen Lere vom Accidens hat begegnen wollen." Wincke, *Kurtze und einfaltige Fragen*, 5–6.

syllogism that took its point of departure from the I John 3:4, which the Mansfelders had interpreted to mean that sin is everything contrary to the law of God.[37] The questions then turned to the extent to which the human being itself contradicted the law, employing as evidence some of the scriptural passages noted above,[38] and concluding that the human being was, therefore, sin itself. In light of this dreadful discovery, the next question asked was:

> What side are you going to choose and with whom will you make your stand? Answer: I will remain loyal to the Holy Scriptures and Doctor Luther, and if a hundred doctors and the entire world will teach the opposite, I will nonetheless never accept their false teachings. Even if an angel came from heaven and taught otherwise, may he be cursed, as St. Paul said in Galatians 1.[39]

Wincke incorporated other aspects of the Mansfelders' program as well, heaping scorn on public opinion and intellectuals for example. Because of their reliance upon human wisdom, the learned were consigned to the devil should they fail to change their ways.[40] He referred to the Eislebeners as Manichaeans who insisted on a distinction between human nature and original sin because "they want[ed] to be able to retain their false teachings regarding original sin, free will, and human powers."[41] Quotations from Luther pepper the work and bolster the argument. A substantial document of over 110 pages, the layout of the catechism with its comprehensive biblical/historical approach to

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[37] "Was heisset denn Sünde in der heiligen Schrifft? Antwort: Sanct Johannes in der 1 Epistel am 3. sagt/ Sünde ist das unrecht/ das ist/ was wider Gottes gebot ist/ und mit dem Gesetzt Gottes nicht uber einkompt/ das alles heisset und ist Sunde." Wincke, *Kurtze und einfaltige Fragen*, 20.

[38] These include Psalm 51:5, Genesis 6:8, Genesis 8:21, and Matthew 15:19.

[39] "Wobey wiltu nuhn bleiben, undt mit weme wiltu es halten? Andtwordt, Ich will er mit der heiligen schrifft, und d. Luther halten, und wen hundert doctores und die gantze weldt dawieder Lehreten, will ich doch durch Gottes gnadt niemermehr mit Irer falsche Lehre halten, Ja wen ein Engell vom hiemell kehme, undt Lehrte anders der sey verflucht, wie Sanct Paulus sagt, zu Gal: am 1 Capitell." Wincke, *Kurtze und einfaltige Fragen*, 34.

[40] "Wir wollen bey des Lieben sanfften Lutherischen warheit bleiben, In Gottes Nahmen, undt die verkertten gelertten mitt Irer Klugheit undt wießheit, lassen zum theuffell fahren, wen sie Ir nicht anderst wollen." Wincke, *Kurtze und einfaltige Fragen*, 35.

[41] "…darumb das sie Ire falsche Lehre von der Erbsünde, freien willen, undt menschlichen kraften gern dadurch wollen erhaltten." Wincke, *Kurtze und einfaltige Fragen*, 14.

original sin and its simple style and tone suggest that Wincke employed it with some success as a tool for teaching children.[42]

In 1575, shortly after being expelled from the territory, Spangenberg composed his own catechism devoted to the issue of original sin.[43] Unlike Wincke, he took a topical approach, resulting in a significantly more complex work. Like his chaplain, he defined sin according to I John 3:4, then proceeded to describe the Mansfelders' position on original sin. But he also responded to the critiques of his opponents at appropriate points, methodically contesting their attacks. Running over 120 pages, his catechism was more of a handbook on original sin than a standard catechism, so it seems likely that Spangenberg composed it for his adherents in the territory at a time when he himself was no longer allowed to enter.[44]

One final feature distinguished Spangenberg's work from Wincke's. Although the chaplain had referred often to Scripture and Luther's writings, Spangenberg added large numbers of proof texts from the Bible, Luther's *Small Catechism*, and hymns common at the time, sources familiar to the laity. For example, employing the catechetical question-and-answer style, Spangenberg stated, "Fine, so prove to me from the Scriptures that a person's sins, as well as original sin, are not

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[42] In 1582, a nostalgic Spangenberg wrote of the children in Tal Mansfeld, "Es waren die kleinen Kinder/ Knaben und Mägdelein angerichtet und unterweiset/ das sie von allen artickeln der Lere/ sonderlich von der Erbsünde/ besser/ gründlicher/ artlicher und bescheidener reden kondten/ denn Mentzel mit alle seinem hauffen/ und vil grosser Hoch gelarter Doctores dazu." Cyriakus Spangenberg. *Caecitas Germaniae. Von der grossen grewlichen Blindheit Deutscher Nation in Götlichen Geistlichen Sachen: menniglichen zu Christlicher Erinnerung/ und notwendiger vermanung und Warnung für die Augen gestellet. Hierinnen findet der Christliche Leser/ Zweyhundert schrecklicher Irrthummen und Sünde der Accidentzer/ wider die Zehen Gobott Gottes. Item, LXXIX. Wörter oder Reden/ so im Streit von der Erbsünde breuchlich/ auß der Schrifft/ Augustino und Luthero erkleret* (n.p., 1582), 292.

[43] Spangenberg, *Kinderlehre von der Erbsünde.*

[44] Spangenberg's opponents considered it a significant work. In 1576, the superintendent convened a synod of territory's entire pastorate to produce an official repudiation (*Abfertigung*) of the Mansfelders' teachings on original sin. This document they dedicated to the electors of Brandenburg and Saxony, the duke of Saxony, the administrator of the archdiocese of Magdeburg, and the duke of Braunschweig and Lüneburg. The synod was intended to ensure the unity of the Mansfeld pastorate on original sin, while the *Abfertigung*, dedicated to the major princes from the surrounding area, was meant to demonstrate the territory's orthodoxy. The centerpiece of this document was a question-by-question examination of Spangenberg's catechism, along with a refutation of each answer. As such, this section of the *Abfertigung* runs to over 200 pages. The Pastorate of Mansfeld, *Abfertigung/ Des Spangenbergischen Irrthumbs*, 71–277.

accidents, something distinct in his nature, but the corrupted nature itself; and [show me] that there is no difference between original sin and corrupted nature."[45] In response, he offered seventy citations from the Bible in which humankind is described multifariously as evil and opposed to God.

Next he requested, "Show me now from [Luther's] catechism how it describes natural man." His answer was a methodical analysis based upon the Ten Commandments in which he argued that their injunctions actually described humankind's nature. "Now, God's commandments convince humankind [of its condition]. The first [demonstrates] that he is without fear, without faith, and without love. The second [that he is] a blasphemer, practitioner of superstition, liar…" and so on through the commandments.[46] Thereafter, Spangenberg explained the articles of faith and the Lord's Prayer in the same manner, listing the various ways in which humankind had failed to live according to God's original intention.

Finally, he turned his attention to the Protestant hymnal. By the 1570s Lutherans had been using hymns for pedagogical purposes for half a century, and Spangenberg himself had made modest attempts to compose his own.[47] "Friend," he wrote in his catechism, "please don't get annoyed, but show me also examples from the little Christian, Lutheran hymnal so that I might learn from it how the natural man should understand himself."[48] Sixty-eight headings arranged alphabetically (such as "Fallen Away from God" ["Abgefallen von Gott"] and "Guilty/ Completely without Innocence" ["Schuldig/ On alle Unschuld"]) followed, each accompanied by brief quotations from various hymns that, to Spangenberg's mind, demonstrated the truth

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[45] "Wolan, so beweis mir aus der Schrifft, das der Mensch Sünde, und demnach die Erbsünde nicht ein Accidens, etwas unterschiedenes in der Natur, Sondern die verderbte Natur selbst, und also kein Unterschied zwischen Erbsünde und verderbter Nature sey." Spangenberg, *Kinderlehre von der Erbsünde*, 36.

[46] "Zeige mir nun aus dem Catechismo an, Was derselbige vom Natürlichen Menschen sage und halte?…Also uberzeuget nu Gottes gesetze den menschen. Im ersten Gebot, das er sey fruchtlos, Glaublos, Lieblos. Im anderen ein Gotteslesterer, Zeuberer, Lügener…." Spangenberg, *Kinderlehre von der Erbsünde*, 47–48.

[47] One of Spangenberg's Easter hymns, *Wir wollen alle fröhlich sein*, is still found in Lutheran hymnals throughout Protestant Europe.

[48] "Lieber, sey förder unbeschwert, und weise mir diesen Grund auch in Unserm Christlichen, Lutherischen Gesangbüchlein, damit ich auch aus demselben lernen möge, Was von dem Natürlichen Menschen an im selbst zu halten." Spangenberg, *Kinderlehre von der Erbsünde*, 51.

of each heading. And like Wincke, Spangenberg warned his readers against the entanglements posed by the "intellectuals" and urged his readers to remain devoted to a simple faith.[49]

In this way, Spangenberg employed the familiar catechism format to present his view of original sin and based his evidence on well-known Bible verses, catechism selections, and hymns. If his catechism was somewhat more complex than Wincke's, it retained the view that the simple Christian could use those resources readily available to understand the controversy and take the correct side. Between these two catechisms, the Mansfelders produced a body of literature that could be used by schoolchildren, but also by individuals with a firmer grounding in Protestant theology.

But by far the most popular way to reach the masses, particularly the illiterate, remained preaching.[50] Spangenberg's history of the controversy, written in the summer of 1573, indicates that polemical sermons began in 1572, becoming increasingly frequent thereafter. Already that year he provides examples of one pastor preaching a morning service arguing one side in the debate, another cleric responding in the afternoon service, representing the other.[51] The few surviving sermons reveal a slow increase in both the polemical and technical level of the debate as presented to the laity.

Spangenberg first preached on the issue of original sin during Passion Week of 1569, well before the cracks within the territory's pastorate had formed. Basing the cycle of six sermons on Lazarus Spengler's

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[49] "Es sind aber gleichwol, der Gelärten sehr viel, welche diese Lere, Das Erbsünde die verderbte Natur sey, nicht wollen recht sein lassen, Solten denn die alle miteinander irren? Andwordt: Du hast bisher Gottes Wort, aus Lutheri Schrifften, und aus deinem Catechismo, und Gesangbüchlein, den Grund dieser Lere angehöret, Dabey bleib, und sihe dich nur nicht umb, nach dem grossen Hauffen, Denn viel sind beruffen, aber wenig sind auserwelet, Daher heisset auch Gottes Volck eine kleine Herde." Spangenberg, *Kinderlehre von der Erbsünde*, 68.

[50] The laity of Mansfeld were no strangers to sermons that contained polemics and instruction in controversial aspects of theology. Years earlier, both Mencel and Spangenberg had published sermons devoted to the controversy over synergism. See Hieronymus Menzel, *Vom Freien Willen des Menschen/ eine Predigt uber den Spruch Christi/ Matth. 23./ Jherusalem/ Jherusalem/ die du tödtest die Propheten/ etc.* (Eisleben: Urban Gaubish, 1564); and Cyriakus Spangenberg, *Wider den vermeinten freien Willen des Menschen und Mitwirkung desselben in Bekehrung sein selbst. Eine Predigt Über das Evangelium Marci VII* (Erfurt: Georgius Bauman, 1561). Patrick Ferry has a brief discussion of these sermons in his article "Confessionalization and Popular Preaching: Sermons against Synergism in Reformation Saxony," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 28 (1997): 1143–66, here at 1160–64.

[51] Spangenberg, *Historia*, 106–12.

hymn, "All Mankind Fell in Adam's Fall" ("Durch Adams Fall ist gantz verderbt") his purpose, he explained, was to illustrate why Christ had to suffer and die, and what it had accomplished for humankind.[52] He described original sin in the most destructive terms.

> Look, dear friends, through Adam's fall sin was introduced into the world. And that was no small sin to despise God's word, to trespass against his commandment, to disobey his mandate, not to be satisfied with such rich favors and gifts, to be equal to God, in fact, to desire to make yourself into God, to believe and follow the devil. Adam did all this in his transgression and so committed the highest idolatry and blasphemy, pride and ambition, disobedience and disloyalty, and in sum, every sin that one could name.[53]

During the course of the six sermons, Spangenberg demonstrated how Adam, in that one act, had disobeyed each of the Ten Commandments,[54] concluding that through his fall, human nature "is corrupted and transformed from the good variety into an evil sort," so that "before God, it is nothing other than sin and can do nothing other than sin."[55] Other aspects of his argument that he later sharpened during the controversy are already apparent in these sermons. He invoked scriptural passages that would become mainstays of his presentation, cited Luther as verification for his position, and displayed clear anti-intellectualism.

Not only did he aim the content of the sermons at the laity, but his manner and language were designed for maximum impact. Throughout his career Spangenberg demonstrated expert communication skills, consciously attempting to reach his parishioners in their own language.

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[52] Cyriakus Spangenberg, *Appendix: Citharae Lutheri*, 45 A. The Appendix appears after Part 4 in the *Cithara Lutheri*. It is interesting to note that the authors of the *Formula of Concord* also refer to this hymn in their explanation of original sin, Ep. 1.8. On the genre of Lutheran hymn-preaching, in the development of which Cyriakus Spangenberg figured prominently, see Martin Rößler, *Die Leidpredigt: Geschichte einer Predigtgattung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1976), esp. 116–124.

[53] "Sehet/ lieben freunde/ also ist durch Adams fall/ die Sünde in die Welt eingefüret worden. Denn das sind nicht geringe Sünde/ Gottes Wort verachten/ Seine Gebot ubertretten, Wider seine Verbot handeln/ Sich an so reichen gnaden und gaben/ nicht wöllen gnügen lassen/ Gott gleich sein/ ja sich selbst zum Gotte machen wollen/ dem Teuffel gleuben und folgen. Solches alles hat Adam/ in seiner ubertrettung gethan/ und also die höchste Abgötterey und Gotteslesterung/ Hoffart und Ehrgeitz/ Ungehorsam und Untrew/ und in Summa/ alle Sunde/ die man nennen kan/ begangen." Spangenberg, Appendix, *Citharae Lutheri*, 48 A.

[54] See especially, Spangenberg, Appendix, *Citharae Lutheri*, 53 B.

[55] "gleichwol also verderbet/ und aus der guten art/ dermassen in eine böse unart verwandelt sein/ das…für Gott anders nicht ist/ denn Sünde/ Auch nicht anders kan den sündigen." Spangenberg, Appendix, *Citharae Lutheri*, 48 B.

In a sermon of 1570, speaking about the fact that his congregation was comprised primarily of miners he stated, "…And then I had to learn their speech and their vocabulary."[56] Indeed, Spangenberg demonstrated a keen understanding of his flock through the examples he chose to employ when, once enumerating the damage caused by sin, he used the following earthy example.

> But how is it possible to list all of the disgraces by which the devil, through sin, has mocked us?…Earlier man had control over all animals. However large and powerful they were they had to be obedient to man. Now man has to be afraid of them. Man must allow himself to be plagued by flies, mosquitoes, and fleas as no one can ward them off. Man must toil by the sweat of his brow, not gaining very much by it and often having expended great energy. It all comes to naught. Is this not a great mockery?[57]

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[56] "…und da habe ich müssen nach ihrer Sprach reden und ihrer Vocabel brauchen…." Cyriakus Spangenberg, *Theander Lutherus. Von des werthen Gottes Manne Doctor Martin Luthers Geistlicher Haushaltung und Ritterschafft: Auch seinem Propheten: Apostel: und Evangelisten Ampt. Wie er der Dritte Helias: Andere Paulus: und Rechter Johannes: Der fürtrefflichste Theologus: Der Engel Apocal: 14. Ein bestendiger Zeuge: Weislicher Pilgram: Und trewer Priester: Auch ein nützlicher Arbeiter/ auf unsers Herrn Gottes Geistlichen Berge gewesen. Alles in Ein und Zwanzig Predigten verfasset* (Ursel: Nicolaus Henricus, 1589), Sermon 14, Foreword. This work was a compilation of Spangenberg's sermons preached twice a year on the anniversary of Luther's birth and death, a tradition he began in 1562 and that ended with Spangenberg's expulsion in 1574. The *Theander Lutherus* demonstrates Spangenberg's skill at reaching his audience. In sermons 14–22, Spangenberg explained how Luther had carried out the tasks of the various workers in the mining industry, but in a spiritual sense and on the mountian of the Lord. In sermon 14 he began with the boy or young man whose role it was to drag the ore out of the mines, and he ended eight sermons later with the mining boss, preaching on each position in between. A good example of his method can be found in Sermon 18, where he demonstrated how Luther had allegorically performed the task of *sinker*. The *sinker* was responsible for boring into the earth through the various geological strata to reach the copper. Spangenberg likened each different layer to a distinct obstacle that stood between Luther and the "Truth." Spangenberg's descriptions of the mining industry and the role of each person in it are so detailed that historians of mining have used them in their work. See Susan R. Boettcher, "Martin Luthers Leben in Predigten: Cyriakus Spangenberg und Johannes Mathesius," in *Martin Luther und der Bergbau im Mansfelder Land*, Rosemarie Knape, ed. (Leipzig: Messedruck Leipzig GmbH, 2000), 163–88.

[57] "Aber wie ists muglich/ alle die schande zu erzelen/ damit uns der Teuffel/ durch die Sünde gehönet hat?… Da man zuvor die Herrschafft uber alle Thiere gehabt/ wie groß und starck auch die gewesen/ das sie uns gehorsamen müssen/ da muß man sich jtzt fur ihnen furchten und entsetzen/ ja von fliegen, mücken/ und flöhen muß man sich plagen lassen/ und kan sich keiner deren gnugsam erweren. Arbeiten muß man in Schweiß des angesichts/ und dennoch nicht viel davon haben/ sondern offt mit schimpff, grosse mühe umb sonst gethan haben. Und ists nicht ein grosser Hohn?" Spangenberg, *Appendix Citharae Lutheri*, 53 B.

Such language and illustrations would likely have resonated with his audience of miners and farmers.

Four years later, at the height of the debate, he sharpened his polemics but the message was the same. Two sermons from 1573 devoted to the Mansfelder view on original sin have survived, one from Spangenberg and the other from Christopher Irenaeus. Vastly different in their sophistication and structure, these sermons represent the two ends of the spectrum with regard to the lay folk targeted by the Mansfelders. The situation requires some explanation as both men preached in Eisleben where the atmosphere can only be described as tense.[58] Although Eisleben was the headquarters of the opposition party, the Mansfelders did have some allies there, among them Wilhelm Sarcerius, son of the territory's third superintendent and pastor at one of the city's four churches. Irenaeus, that congregation's former clergyman, had left his post in 1564 for a position in ducal Saxony, but he had recently returned to Mansfeld in the service of the Hinterort counts. A pugnacious and outspoken supporter of the Mansfelders, he preached occasionally at his old parish and it is from one of these guest appearances that his sermon comes. But Spangenberg also made an appearance there. The Hinterort count, Volrad (who had the *ius patronatus* over Sarcerius's church in Eisleben), Sarcerius, and Spangenberg together decided that Spangenberg should preach a sermon in Eisleben (later printed) "so that [the people there] would always have close at hand a simple, short report and a response to the opponents' reproach."[59] Thus both sermons were given under dramatic circumstances at the height of the conflict.

In his sermon, Spangenberg exhibited those aspects of his thought and approach to the laity that have now become familiar. He defined his position over against that of his opponents using the accustomed passages from Scripture and citations from Luther, but paid much closer attention to his opponents' position than he had in 1569.[60]

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[58] In the beginning of his sermon, Spangenberg asked for the full attention of his audience, "denn Ich auch nicht vergebens/ oder ohne alles gefehr/ Heute an diesem ort, euch von diesem Artickel predige." Spangenberg, *Eine Predigte Von der Sünde*, 10.

[59] "…damit sie stets bey der Hand/ zum einfaltigen kurtzen Bericht/ und auch auf des widerparts fürwurff/ zu Antwort haben möchten…." Spangenberg, *Eine Predigte Von der Sünde*, 5.

[60] "Dagegen sagen die anderen stracks Nein/ solches sey nicht war/ Denn Erbsünde sey nicht die Verderbte Natur selbst/ sondern etwas Unterschiedenes an der Natur/ nennen aber nicht diese Unterschiedene ding/ was es sey/ ohne das sie sagen es sey

Noteworthy is that he also referred to a variety of events and pamphlets relevant to the controversy: the Weimar Colloquium of 1571; a sermon by the Eislebener (and sometime Mansfelder) Zacharias Praetorius; the Eislebeners' pamphlet "Foundation of the Teaching of Original Sin" (*Grund der Lere von der Erbsünde*); the Eisleben Colloquium of 1572; and his own published confession on original sin, references that assume an audience interested in the controversy and generally apprised of its contours. Finally, he urged those sitting on the sideline to become involved, for had not Luther said that a nine-year-old boy or a miller's maid could at times judge more accurately in religious controversy than all the doctors and bishops? The address, it seems, was geared toward a rather general audience.

In his sermon Irenaeus also responded to his opponents but in a much more specific and direct way than Spangenberg, countering attacks leveled against him by the superintendent in a sermon preached four days prior. Mencel had, among other things, accused Irenaeus of being a false teacher and a Manichaean. Irenaeus dissected the superintendent's sermon and responded to each point, describing here how Mencel had misrepresented him, there how the superintendent had mistranslated a Hebrew word or misread Luther. Finally, Irenaeus rejected the Eislebeners' claim that because they did not employ the word *accident* to describe original sin, they were not "Accidenters," for they refused to condemn the word. If someone always praised the Koran, asked Irenaeus, could we not conclude that he was a Muslim?[61] Irenaeus's sermon, with its direct references to Mencel's, presupposes an audience even more involved in the controversy than Spangenberg's, for Irenaeus was in direct and explicit dialogue with Mencel.

With regard to both genre and content, the final medium by which the Mansfelders attempted to reach the laity, the hymn, emphasized the connections to Martin Luther and the early Reformation. Only one Mansfelder hymn on the issue of original sin has survived, "Lord Keep us Steadfast in thy Word" by Cyriakus Spangenberg, a reworking of Martin Luther's 1541 hymn by the same title. Already in Luther's version, enemies of the Reformation were attempting to silence the Gospel, so that the hymn is a plea to God to thwart these attempts

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eine Verderbung/ oder ein Schade an der Natur/ Verdammen/ Verjagen und plagen darüber/ andere die solche Meinung nicht gut helffen/ noch ihnen gefallen lassen wollen." Spangenberg, *Eine Predigte Von der Sünde*, 5.

[61] Irenaeus, *Eine Hochzeit Predigt*, 14.

and allow his faithful to retain the Gospel message. In the first verse Luther identifies the opponents of the Gospel as the pope and the Turk. Writing in 1574, Spangenberg retains Luther's opening line, the plea that God keep his people steadfast in the Gospel, but redefines the pope and Turk as the current foes of the Mansfelders. "The pope," insists Spangenberg, "is all of the intellectuals who use reason so facilely to promote false doctrines that fail to give all honor to Christ."[62] "The Turk," continues Spangenberg, "is the great lords who would use force against us so that we dare not speak the truth, or simply drive us from the land."[63] Within this framework of his enemies' machinations, Spangenberg recounts during the course of the hymn's twenty four verses the false doctrines that the intellectuals were promoting, namely that fallen human nature is merely an accident and can, therefore, help make humans holy. For their part the "great lords," explained Spangenberg, refused to allow the Mansfelders to refer to the substance of humankind as poison, but like the Turks, insisted that God created the world as good and so it remains. The hymn worked on a variety of levels. It offered a simple effective means by which Spangenberg could communicate the content of the Mansfelders' message while critiquing the position of his opponents. What is more, it intimately connected his struggle with Luther's by using a genre that the Reformer had made famous, by appropriating the first line of one of his most recognized hymns, and by overtly equating Luther's enemies with his own.

From their general approach and from the variety of genre's they employed, it is clear that the Mansfelders assumed the existence of a group of laity capable of following the controversy over original sin. Some of the Mansfelder sermons were aimed at the more literate and invested end of this group, like Irenaeus's which was part of a dialogue executed at a fairly technical level. Others were efforts to bring their message to non-literate and less engaged parishioners, such as

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[62] Der Bapst alle Gelerten sind
die yetzund treiben so geschwind
nach ir vernunfft solch falsche lehr,
die Christo nicht gibt alle ehr: Wackernagel, *Das deutsche Kirchenlied,* v. 4, No. 249.

[63] Der Türck das sind die grossen Herrn,
die mit gewalt uns wöllen wehrn,
Das wir die warheit nicht sollen sagn
oder wöllen uns zum Land ausjagn. Wackernagel, *Das deutsche Kirchenlied,* v. 4, No. 249.

Spangenberg's of 1573, which laid out the position of the Mansfelders in a simple and non-technical form. Catechisms provided children and adults with an easy format by which to learn the Mansfelders' position on original sin. References to scriptural verses, hymns, and passages from the catechism demonstrated (to their mind) the continuity of their position with their predecessors, and earthy language and popular examples were meant to further appeal to the laity. Finally, the one hymn that survives really drove home the connection between the struggles of the early Reformation and their own troubles. It is also noteworthy that the level, complexity, and polemical language of the preaching rose gradually as the controversy wore on, giving the laity the opportunity to slowly increase their understanding of the issue at hand. Moreover, regardless of the level of society the Mansfelders targeted, they made the same general argument and employed the same proof passages from Scripture and citations from Luther. From the most educated and involved of the laity to the least, all would have been privy to these verses and citations. And clearly the Mansfelders encouraged their parishioners to become interested and make decisions about their own theological positions, empowering them to do so. In this manner, the Mansfelders put their theoretical understanding of the role of the laity in the church into practice, a strategy that would bear much fruit.

"People clear the fence at the lowest point": The Eislebeners and the Laity

Like their counterparts, Mencel and the Eislebeners were heirs to Luther's doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and, in the past, had worked with Spangenberg to establish schools, teach the children and laity the fundamentals of Protestant theology, and observe their progress through regular parish visitations. But during the conflict over original sin, a perceptible difference between the Mansfelders and Eislebeners emerged with regard to the role each assigned to the commoners and each group's general estimation of the laity. The Eislebeners insisted that because the Scriptures could be complicated, professional theologians should be exclusively responsible for their interpretation. As a result, the laity's role was to receive the wisdom of the appropriate authorities. Conversely, Mencel and his colleagues were deeply critical of their opponents' efforts to include the commoners

in the debate, demonstrating great reluctance to address their own parishioners on the topic at all. When they finally did, their decision was defensive, necessitated by their opponents' campaign to win the people to their cause.

The Eislebeners response to the Mansfelders' strategy vis-à-vis the laity already reveals their very different approach. In their official condemnation of the Mansfelders' teachings, entitled *Repudiation* (*Abfertigung*)[64] and dedicated to the feudal lords and the princes of surrounding territories, they pondered the Mansfelders' interaction with the laity at some length. Because the work was intended to demonstrate that the civil unrest caused by the controversy had been stirred up solely by their opponents, it must be considered to some extent a piece of propaganda. But certain elements of their critique of the Mansfelders imply particular views of the laity's intellectual abilities later confirmed in other Eislebener writings from the controversy.

"People clear the fence at its lowest point"[65] was the old saying that the Eislebeners contended accurately depicted the Mansfelders' approach to the laity. Satan himself, they insisted, had pioneered this method shortly after creation by attacking the woman first because he knew that the man could resist his lies. Moreover, in the time of the Julian apostasy Satan again realized that the old and wise Christians allowed themselves to be burned rather than recant, so he turned his attention to young people (*jung hernachwachsende Völcklein*). St. Paul perceived this tactic at work when he warned that Satan trained his false teachers to approach first the women, who would in turn prevail on their men. Now the Mansfelders had employed this strategy in an "absolonian attack" on the common folk.[66] Specifically, claimed Mencel, Spangenberg had

> applied himself industriously so that he might get the common man on his side, a group upon whom he could rely.... He recognized and admitted that all properly called teachers in the universities and pure churches and lands from whom he sought approval, rejected the new Manichaean, Illyrican heresy that he embraced and espoused. [When he saw this happen] he shifted the judgment away from them and gave it

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[64] The Pastorate of Mansfeld, *Abfertigung/ Des Spangenbergischen Irrthumbs,* especially 31–37.

[65] "Wo der Zaun am nidrigsten ist, Da will jederman ubersteigen." The Pastorate of Mansfeld, *Abfertigung/ Des Spangenbergischen Irrthumbs*, 31.

[66] This is a reference to the Israelite King David's son Absalom, who curried favor among the folk to steal the monarchy from his father. See II Samuel 15.

> to the common man, elevated and praised him, and at the same time, asserted and determined that the intellectuals were insignificant.[67]

A strict vertical hierarchy can be detected in these accusations. At the top stood the properly called teachers in the universities and territories; at the bottom stood the commoners. Spangenberg had reversed this order, defining the layman's judgment as paramount and diminishing that of the highly trained theologian. What is more, they continued, "the women were pursued with special industry."[68] The Mansfelders had addressed secret letters to both common women and various counts' wives in an effort to get at the men via their wives.[69] Other Mansfelder pastors, claimed the Eislebeners, had used their status as father confessors or chaplains to convince certain women of their views and "to coerce simple, pious hearts to accept the novel, unprecedented, blasphemous teachings."[70] And if women and simple Christians were considered easy targets, the Mansfelders did not hesitate to attack the most vulnerable group of all, the children. Like the Jesuits and Sacramentarians before them, claimed the Eislebeners, the Mansfelders had "indoctrinated the simple youth, hiding their poison in them."[71]

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[67] "…darauff alle vleise gewendet, das er den gemeinen Man auff seine seitten gezogen, auff welchen er sich verlassen könte…. da er gesehen und gemerckt, das alle rechtschaffene Lerer, in hohen schulen, reinen Kirchen und Landen, bey denen er allenhalben Beyfal gesucht, dem newen Manicheischen, Illyrischen Schwarm und Irrthumb, des er sich angenommen, und teilhafftig gemacht, widersprochen—hat er das urteil, davon zurichten, auff den gemeinen Man gestellet, denselben erhoben und gepreiset, und dagegen alle Gelerte auffs höchste vernichtiget und versprochen." The Pastorate of Mansfeld, *Abfertigung/ Des Spangenbergischen Irrthumbs*, 33.

[68] "…die Weibes personen haben auch mit besonderm vleis ersucht werden müssen." The Pastorate of Mansfeld, *Abfertigung/ Des Spangenbergischen Irrthumbs*, 34.

[69] "Daher sind etliche heimliche schreiben, nicht allein an geringe und gemeine, sondern auch an Adels und hohe Greffliche Weibespersonen, ergangen…in welchen man wunderbarlich gekleuttert, und das beste versucht, das man sie von iren Mennern abwenden, oder ire Menner durch sie, da man sie hette gern hin haben wollen, bringen möchte." The Pastorate of Mansfeld, *Abfertigung/ Des Spangenbergischen Irrthumbs*, 34.

[70] "…den einfeltigen frommen Hertzen, die newe, unerhörte und Gottes lesterische Lere einzwingen möchte." The Pastorate of Mansfeld, *Abfertigung/ Des Spangenbergischen Irrthumbs*, 35.

[71] "…und in dieselben ire Gifft verstecket, und der einfeltigen Jugend eingebildet." The Pastorate of Mansfeld, *Abfertigung/ Des Spangenbergischen Irrthumbs*, 36. The Eislebeners feared that only in the future would the results of this campaign be fully realized: "Wenn es nu uber zwantzig/ oder dreissig jar kommen werde/ so werde man erst recht sehen/ was sie fur Lere geführet haben/ und wie sich dieselbe ausbreiten würde." Conrad Porta, *Des heiligen Catechismi/ oder Leyen Bibel/ Nutz und*

From the perspective of the Eislebeners, the Mansfelders' appeal to the commoners had met with diabolically inspired success.

> But the evil, turbulent, acrimonious spirit of Spangenberg drove and excited the horridly bewitched and blinded the folk, [a spirit] that gradually alighted in their ears [in Tal Mansfeld] and other areas of the territory by means of his many-faceted writings. Thus he ensnared the people in Manichaean heterodoxy and horribly embittered them against all true teachers who contradicted him and his cohort.[72]

Although the word bewitched (*bezaubert*) conjures up the notion of metaphysical, satanic tactics, the Eislebeners also attributed their opponents' success to the variety of "confessions, apologies, teachings and polemical writings, questions-and-answer catechisms, propositions, protestations, and other such mechanisms," composed by the Mansfelders.[73] Moreover, the Eislebeners' dim view of the commoners' ability to understand doctrine is corroborated elsewhere in their writings. Mencel claimed that Spangenberg had "shamefully and evilly misled and seduced the silly, simple folk."[74] Such folk, insisted the Eislebeners, should not be involved in a theological disputation which was "for the common man and the laity, a completely unnecessary conflict."[75] Because the people were not educated enough to make proper judgments, the Eislebeners had attempted to keep the philosophical terminology of *accident* and *substance* out of the discussion,

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Hoheit. Aus den geistreichen Büchern D. Martini Lutheri des Mans Gottes/ und anderer Furtrefflicher Theologen bedencken/ in etliche noetige Artickel/ so nach folgenden Vorreden verzeichnet sein/ in Frage und Antwort verfasset (Halle: Urban Gaubisch, 1578), 4.

[72] "Hierzu aber hat die grewlich bezauberten und armen verblendten Leute/ der unruige/ bittere/ böse Geist Spangenbergii angetrieben und gehetzet welcher fur und fur mit seinen vielfaltigen practierischen schreiben den Leuten alda (wie in andern orten dieser Graffschafft) in den Ohren liget/ das er sie bey sich in dem Manicheischen Schwarm erhalten/ und wider alle trewe Lerer/ so im/ und seinem anhange widersprechen/ auffs aller grewlichste verbittern möge." Hieronymus Mencel, *Eine Predigt/ Uber den Spruch Petri. 2. Gott hat den Gerechten Loth/ etc. Bey der Christlichen Begrebnis/ des Ehrwirdigen und Hoch gelarten Herrn Simonis Musaei/ der heiligen Schrifft Doctores/ und Mansfeldischen Decani* (Halle: Urban Gaubisch, 1577), 5.

[73] "…durch Bekentnisse, durch Apologien, durch Lere und Streitschrifften, durch Fragestücke, durch Propositiones, Protestationes, und dergleichen…" The Pastorate of Mansfeld, *Abfertigung/ Des Spangenbergischen Irrthumbs*, 9.

[74] "…die alberen einfeltigen Leyen schendlich/ und böslich verführet/ und bethöret." Mencel, *Eine Newe Spangenbergische Bekentnis*, 32.

[75] "…für den gemeinen Man und Leyen gantz unnötigen streit…" Mencel, *Postilla*, 2.

believing that such "school words" (*Schulwörter*) should not "be used in the pulpits and brought into the church."[76]

If the Mansfelders where characterized by anti-intellectualism, the Eislebeners demonstrated a high regard for learning. Although they did not exalt the doctors to the degree that the Mansfelders demonized them, they took the view that the Scriptures were not always transparent and that some expertise was necessary to correctly interpret them. One example of this respect for the erudite comes from the Eislebeners' attempts to define the word *sin*, which, they claimed, required a knowledge of Hebrew: "So all educated and God-fearing theologians know that the word *sin*, according to the Hebrew language, is not a created essence but something evil and impure, [something] that has been corrupted and for that reason is guilty and damned."[77] The implication here is that because knowledge of simple German was not enough to truly grasp the meaning of the word *sin*, those without Hebrew required theologians to help them understand it.[78]

The highly educated also best understood Luther's writings, argued the Eislebeners, for "it is well-known that all God-fearing, educated people think that Luther uses the word sin in *loco praedicati*, that he meant by it where things stand with the human nature and essence after the fall and that they are corrupted to their foundations, impure, and guilty."[79] To the educated, Luther's meaning was clear but not necessarily to the laity. Moreover, neither Luther's speech nor that of the Scriptures were always transparent.

> One must acknowledge that Luther and the Scriptures, in their teachings regarding original sin, use figurative sayings and flowered speech which

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[76] "…auff die Cantzel gebracht/ und in die Kirche gefüret würden…" Mencel, *Erklerung/ Der Weinmarischen Bekentnis*, 8.

[77] "So ist auch allen Gelerten und Gottfürchtigen Theologen bekand/ das das wort Sünde/ nach art der Hebraischen Sprache/ nicht ein erschaffen Wesen/ Sondern etwas böses und unreines heisset/ das verderbet ist/ und derwegen schuldig und verdampt wird." Mencel, *Grund der Lere*, 11.

[78] On more than one occasion the Eislebeners argued that their position relied upon the proper understanding of the Hebrew word for sin. "Damit man auch wisse/ wie wir das wort Sunde brauchen/ So nemen wirs in dem verstande an/ den Lutherus nach art der Hebraischen Sprache/ und mit ime bisher die Kirche gefüret hat/ Nemlich/ das Sünde ist/ und heisset/ nicht ein selbstandiges/ oder sonderliches Wesen.… Sondern die grewliche grundlose/ böse tieffe Verderbung.…" Mencel, *Grund der Lere*, 39–40.

[79] "Da doch allen Gottfürchtigen gelerten Leuten sehr wol bekant ist/ das Lutherus/ das wort/ Sünde/ also *loco praedicati* setzt/ das er mit demselben erkleret/ wie es nach dem falle umb aller Menschen Natur und Wesen stehen/ Nemlich das sie zu grunde verderbet/ unrein/ und schuldig sein." Mencel, *Kurtze verzeichnis*, 11–12.

> one should take according to the simple way of speaking and understand it as such. The intellectuals call such speech *metalepses*, and sometimes also *auxeses*, in which a form or abstract is used in place of something concrete.[80]

The implication here is that because the educated had examined the speech used by Luther and found in the Scriptures, labeled and comprehended it, they truly ascertained its meaning.

It comes as no surprise, then, that the Eislebeners expressed deep anxiety over the Mansfelders' warnings to their parishioners not to listen to the intellectuals. Such admonitions led Mencel to query, "What of this public cry that [they] will not acknowledge the views of any person or church, and even if all of the intellectuals and all churches sided with us, we would still be wrong and our position false?"[81] Complete refusal to acknowledge the teachings of the learned was madness, for the proper understanding of Scripture resided in the consensus of the intellectuals.[82]

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[80] "Mus man bekennen/ das Lutherus so wol also die Schrifft/ in seiner Lere von der Erbsünde/ *figuratas locutiones*/ verblümete reden gebraucht hat/ welche man nach einfeltiger weise zu reden annemen/ und verstehen sol. Die Gelerten nenne solche reden Metalepses, ein theils auch Auxeses, da *forma seu abstractum pro concreto* gebrauchet worden." Mencel, *Eine Newe Spangenbergische Bekentnis*, 40.

[81] "Was auch dis offentlich geschrey/ das man keines Menschen oder Kirchen erkentnis leiden wil/ und wenn es schon alle Gelerte/ und alle Kirchen mit uns hielten/ so weren wir dennoch unrecht/ und müsten kurtzumb unrecht haben etc." Mencel, *Erklerung Der Weinmarischen Bekentnis*, 3. On various occasions the Eislebeners repeated their understanding of the Mansfelders' refusal to listen to traditional authorities with an air of scorn and disbelief: "Daraus ist das vierde erfolget, das sie hernach in iren Schrifften, und sonsten offentlich furgegeben haben, Es were nu mehr keine reine Kirchen in Deutschland zu finden. Sie weren alle mit dem Accidentischen Gifft beflecket. Derwegen köndten sie derselben keine zu Richtern, uber ire Sachen leiden, haben auch darauff ire Pfarkinder, im Druck und sonst erstlich vermanet, das sie sich nicht daran keren solten. Wenn schon tausend Kirchen, und alle hohe Schulen, und Gelerten wider sie erkendten, und ire Lere verdammeten, so were sie dennoch recht." The Pastorate of Mansfeld, *Abfertigung/ Des Spangenbergischen Irrthumbs*, 13.

[82] Two caveats should be made about this description of the Eislebeners' view of who had the ability and responsibility to interpret Scripture. First, when the Eislebeners referred to intellectuals, this should not be confused with those who employed philosophy in the definition of doctrine. Like the Mansfelders, the Eislebeners were wary of such theologians, accusing Flacius of the same: "Aber weil er Aristotelem/ Scaligerum/ und ander Philosophos höher achtet/ denn Gottes Wort…Denn was können doch die Philosophi von der Erbsünde/ ausser Gottes wort wissen? Gantz und gahr nichts/ noch schleppet sich Illyricus mit iren Regulis und Fundamenten/ als:…corruptio unius est generatio alterius…" Hugo, *Grundlicher und Klarer Bericht*, 2. Second, the Eislebeners did not completely reject the laity's role in the comprehension of proper doctrine. Although Mencel and his colleagues did not urge the people to get involved, they did eventually cede a role to the parishioners, arguing that the people could use

Finally, from the very beginning of the conflict, the Eislebeners argued that they would rather have kept the debate away from the commoners, but because the Mansfelders targeted the laity, they had no choice but to reply. When the superintendent in particular realized that the Mansfelders would never stop, never let the issue die, never cease to publish unless confronted, he conceded, "Finally the undeniable necessity of my position and my conscience compel and drive me; I see that by keeping silent any longer the danger will only increase and the opponents will not stop or limit their open preaching, condemnations, writings, and printings."[83] This view, that he only involved the laity when given no other choice, is again apparent a decade later in his ponderings of the conflict:

> Because I watched all this with a troubled soul, I could not keep quiet on account of my position and duty, but had to speak out, I had to demonstrate and defend my assessment to the people who belong to my district and inform them of the real truth with God's word and prove the right and warn them of the miserable way they were seduced.[84]

Clearly the decision to include the laity was defensive rather than offensive.

The different views of the laity exhibited by each side in the debate may be attributed, in part, to expediency. By about 1573, most of the Lutheran intellectual world (including the Gnesio-Lutherans) and territorial churches had condemned Flacius' understanding of original sin. It was natural that the Eislebeners would stress their own inclusion in this group and its authority. Without such support, Spangenberg and the Mansfelders were forced to emphasize the abilities and increase

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their catechisms to judge whether the Mansfelders were right in their assessment of original sin. In 1578, Conrad Porta, a leading Eislebener, wrote, "Wenn ein gemeiner Leye dis höret/…der dencket der sache mit vleis nach/ und sihet/ ob sich diese Lere auch mit dem heiligen Catechismo vergleicht…" Porta, *Des heiligen Catechismi*, 222. But such statements came only late in the controversy and apparently in response to the position of the Mansfelders.

[83] "Dazu mich auch entlich die unvermeidliche not meines Amptes/ und gewissen dringet/ und treibet/ Weil ich sehe/ das bey lengerem stillschweigen die fehrligkeit grösser werden/ und bey andern des offentlichen predigens/ verdammens/ schreibens/ und druckens kein auffhören/ und masse sein/ und werden will." Mencel, Introduction to Henrich Roth's *Catechismi Predigt*, 3.

[84] "Weil ich denn dasselbe mit betrübten gemüthe gesehen/ unnd zu solchem/ von wegen meines Ampts/ nicht habe schweigen können/ sondern wehren/ weidersprechen/ die Leute/ meiner Inspection unterworffen/ mit Gottes worte/ die rechte warheit unterrichten/ zu rechte weisen/ und für irer jemmerlichen verführung warnen müssen…" Mencel, *Postilla*, 2.

the responsibilities of those adherents they did have, the laity. But this argument only partially explains their two approaches that were, in fact, based on more fundamental differences. Long before the split occurred in Mansfeld, Spangenberg had urged the laity to become involved in theological debates; and he began preaching on original sin already in 1569, two years before divisions emerged in the territory. For him, lay involvement was not merely the result of a strategy dictated by expediency. And true to their word, the Eislebeners did not address the laity until it became necessary to respond to the Mansfelders' efforts.

The Eislebeners' Treatment of the Laity during the Controversy

During the controversy over original sin, the Eislebeners put into practice their notions of the proper role of the laity in the church. After an initial period of reticence, they responded to the Mansfelder clergy's overtures to the parishioners with a variety of methods similar to those of their counterparts. Although the Eislebeners' use of pamphlets in the controversy defies the conclusion that any systematic and comprehensive strategy was at work, careful analysis reveals a few tendencies. Whereas Spangenberg had already published his position on original sin in German by 1571, the Eislebeners did so only in 1573. Even then they composed far fewer pamphlets than their opponents, which meant that they often found themselves on the defensive, a situation exemplified by one of their earliest responses. In the first half of this pamphlet, Mencel disputed the Mansfelders' assertion that he had retreated from his position on original sin at the Weimar Colloquium; in the second half, Andreas Fabricius, another prominent Eislebener, likewise replied to accusations that earlier he had taken the Mansfelder view of original sin only to waffle and then change allegiances.[85] The reactive

[85] Mencel and Fabricius, *M. Hieronymi Mencelii/ Mansfeldischen Superintendenten*. Other examples of the reactive nature of their approach include: Mencel, *Eine Newe Spangenbergische Bekentnis*; and the Eislebeners, *Notwendige Verantwortunge und Gruendlich ablenung der Irrthumbe so etlichen Predigern in der Grafschaft Mansfelt zugemessen werden durch eine…Schrift unter den Namen Der Wolgebornen und Edlen Herren/ Herrn Volraden und Carln des Eltern/ Gebrüder/ Graffen und Herren zu Mansfelt etc. Sampt Anzeigung/ Was fur falsche Lere/ und grobe Irrthumbe in solche Schrifft eingefürth und vertheidiget werden. Durch den Superintendenten und die andern Prediger zu Eisleben* (Eisleben: Urban Gaubisch, 1574). Both are responses to specific writings of the Mansfelders.

nature of this and other treatises is symptomatic of the Eislebeners' reluctance to present the controversy to the laity.

When they did finally decide to challenge their opponents publicly, they employed two approaches to the question of original sin. To a lesser degree, they articulated their own position on the matter. For example, among the earliest and most fundamental explanations of their position was the 1573 treatise entitled *The Foundation of the Teaching on Original Sin*, the full title of which indicated that it was for "all Christians,"[86] but which, in fact, contained a lengthy appeal to the pastors in the territory, especially those in the countryside.[87] The treatise contains a detailed response to the two central questions of the controversy: whether original sin was a corruption of nature or corrupted nature; and whether there was a difference between human nature and the corruption. In this case where the audience was clearly clerical, they focused on their own definition of original sin rather than on a critique of the Mansfelder position.

More often than not, and particularly when addressing "the simple Christian" however, they employed a second approach, mentioning their own definition of original sin in passing, but focusing rather on condemning their opponents' views. In a treatise appealing to "all God-fearing Christians in Eisleben and other areas of the territory of Mansfeld,"[88] Mencel spilled much ink enumerating the errors and heretical implications of the Mansfelders' position: they were Manichaeans who argued that sin was a substance; they misused the words of Luther; they believed that God had created evil or that the devil had the power to create; they questioned the humanity of Christ; they believed that humankind had become living devils; they insisted that original sin must be baptized in the name of the Trinity; and they asserted that humankind will be newly created in the resurrection

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[86] Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere.*

[87] "Wir vermanen aber alhie Brüderlich/ und bitten hertzlich/ alle die jenigen/ so mit uns bisher in dieser Graffschafft/ in einem eintrechtigen Ministerio und bekentnis gewesen/ und sonderlich die Herrn Pfarherrn auffm Lande/ das sie diesen jetzt geschehenen bericht wol einnemen/ und unsere erklerung/ und nach folgende Schrifft mit vleis/ und anruffung Gottes lesen/ und erwegen wollen/ Und wol bedencken/ mit was grund und fug sie sich von andern einnemen/ vielleicht auch viel eines andern von uns bereden/ und abzusondern haben vermögen lassen." Mencel et al., *Grund der Lere*, 12.

[88] "Allen Gottfürchtigen Christen in Eisleben/ und andern orten der Graffschafft Mansfelt." Mencel, *Kurtze verzeichnis Etlicher grober Irrthumbe*, 3.

rather than cleansed of sins.[89] In this way the Eislebeners focused their efforts on discrediting their opponents rather than advocating their own understanding of original sin.

Unlike their opponents, however, the Eislebeners produced no catechisms or handbooks designed specifically to address the issue of original sin, although there was no lack of opportunity. In 1586, Andreas Fabricius published a *Hausvater* book, with an accompanying letter of dedication that suggests it was actually composed in 1571, just as the controversy was getting underway. He made no mention of original sin.[90] Not until 1578 did Conrad Porta dedicate fewer than twenty of nearly three hundred pages to original sin in his commentary on *Luther's Small Catechism*.[91] And Porta spent more time condemning the Mansfelders for their misuse of the catechetical form than his own explanation of original sin. When he did take up the issue, he focused on the distinction between human nature and the corruption caused by original sin. The fact that Christians believed that Christ saved them from their sins, he suggested, demonstrates that the individual and sin are separate things. The Holy Ghost had called and enlightened Christians, not original sin. Porta proceeded, quoting passages from *Luther's Small Catechism* that, he believed, presupposed a distinction between sin and sinner and concluded regarding the Mansfelders' position "it is obvious and apparent that this new teaching regarding original sin goes against all the chief parts of the holy Christian

[89] The tactic of concentrating solely or primarily on a critique of the Mansfelders' views is also apparent in the 1574 pamphlet by the Eisleben pastors entitled, *Beweis und Erzelung*. The pamphlet is made up of sixteen points in which the Eislebeners accuse their opponents of heretical teachings.

[90] Andreas Fabricius, *Die Hauskirche. Das ist: Wie ein Hausvater neben dem offentlichen Predigampt/ auch daheime sein Heufflein zu Gottes wort/ und dem lieben Catechismo reitzen sol* (Eisleben: Andreas Petri, 1586). If this book was written in 1571 as the dedication suggests, it would probably have been a little early in the controversy to devote a section to the question of original sin. Since it was published in 1586, one might conclude that this was long enough after the controversy no longer to necessitate the inclusion of such a section. While this may have been the case, the fact that Conrad Porta's (another Eislebener) handbook for Lutheran ministers included a lengthy section on the issue of original sin and was also published in 1586, bespeaks the view that it was still a current issue. See Conrad Porta, *Pastorale lutherii. Das ist: Nützlicher und notiger Unterricht/ von den fürnemsten stücken zu heiligen Ministerio gehörig/ Und richtige Antwort auff mancherley wichtige Fragen/ von schweren und gefehrlichen Casibus, so in demselbigen fürfallen mögen* (Eisleben: Andreas Petri, 1586), 76–106.

[91] Conrad Porta, *Des heiligen Catechismi*, 219–37.

catechism, which have been presented here…."[92] Again the approach was reactive. Porta made no effort to display the intricacies of the Eislebener position, but attempted to refute the Mansfelder position on a fairly unsophisticated level.

As with their production of pamphlets, the Eislebeners began preaching on the question of original sin considerably later than their opponents. Whereas by the spring of 1569 Spangenberg had already devoted six sermons to the matter, the first outright Eislebener comment from the pulpit occurred in February 1572.[93] Thereafter many references to Eislebener sermons on original sin exist, but only one has survived.[94] It would be inappropriate to draw blanket conclusions regarding their preaching from one sermon, but it can at least serve as an example of one concrete approach they took. Mencel himself preached the sermon at the funeral of Andreas Krauss, a thirty-five-year veteran of the territory's pastorate and the last man ordained by Martin Luther just days before his death in 1546. Mencel chose as his text Luke 15:4–10, the parable of the shepherd who loses one sheep and leaves the other 99 to seek it, and the parable of the woman who loses one of ten silver coins then searches her house until she finds it. In both cases the protagonist rejoiced at the return of the

[92] "…lauter und offenbar ist/ das diese newe Lere von der Erbsünde/ wider Heubtstücke des heiligen Christlichen Catechismi sind/ da furgegeben wird…." Conrad Porta, *Des heiligen Catechismi*, 236.

[93] Spangenberg, *Historia*, 43.

[94] During the spring and summer of 1575, plague ravaged Eisleben killing three Eislebener pastors and the wife of a fourth. In the introduction to the published version of their funeral sermons, Mencel described all three men as the arch-enemies of the Manichaean heresy up to their dying breaths, referring particularly to their preaching against it. Johann Stam had always warned his parishioners of theological errors, especially in the case of the Manichaean heresy. "Denn ir selbs gehöret habet/ wie er solche Schwermerey in seinen Predigten gestrafft/ und deutlich und gründtlich widerleget hat." Moreover, Heinrich Roth, "hat nicht allein das rechte und gute gepredigt/ Sondern auch das böse und unrechte hie und anderswo verworffen/ und ernstlich gestraffet/ Darumb er im selbst den Teufel uber den hals gereitzet/ das er im sampt seinen Gliedmassen/ sonderlich den newen trotzigen Manicheern/ ist hertzlich feind gewest." Hieronymus Mencel, *Vier Christliche Predigten. Die Erste/ uber das Evangelion Johannis am 10 Capitel. Die Ander/ uber den Spruch Danielis am 12/ Capitel. Die Dritte/ uber das Evangelion Luce am 15. Capitel. Die Vierde/ uber den Spruch Job am ersten Capitel. Geschehen zu Eisleben auff dem Gottes Acker. Bey den Christlichen Begrebnissen/ der Ehrwirdigen Wolgelerten/ Erbarn und Tugendsamen/ Herrn M. Heinrich Rothen/ Pfarherrn zu S. Andreas. M. Johan Stammen/ Pfarherrn zu S. Annen. Herr Andreas Krausen/ Diacon zu S. Peter. Und Frawen Urselen/ Herrn M. Conrad Porten Hausfrawen* (Eisleben: Urban Gaubisch, 1575), 32–33 and 56.

sought-after item. To demonstrate the human condition, Mencel compared the human being with the lost sheep and coin.

> Our quandary is that we are poor, erring sheep, lost coins, and prodigal sons and daughters who cannot find our own way. Rather, left to our own devices, we are and must be erring, lost, and in sin (in which we are conceived and born), under the power of the devil, lost and damned to eternal death, where we must remain if we are not aided by the true Shepherd and pious Father through his grace.[95]

But God seeks lost and condemned humans, insisted Mencel, just as the shepherd and the woman searched for the sheep and the coin, rejoicing when He finds them. Mencel's point was that God loved the sinner, not the sin. This axiom, he argued, necessitates a distinction between the two. The differentiation is further confirmed by the fact that Jesus interacted with publicans and sinners, a clear sign that He loved those lost individuals, but not their evil ways. Furthermore, Christ Himself had said that there is great rejoicing in heaven at the repentance of one sinner. Only at this point did Mencel overtly refer to the controversy. He admitted that one could call original sin a corruption of nature, as Luther did, or refer to it as St. John did, namely as everything contrary to the law. The Scriptures spoke of sin in both ways. But returning to his point he argued, "they do not refer to sin or original sin as the person or the human nature in and of itself. For here [the Scriptures] differentiate between nature and the corruption, between the person and sin."[96]

Mencel's seemingly simple sermon is, on closer examination, actually quite sophisticated from a rhetorical standpoint. He did not announce his topic as original sin, but approached the issue from the perspective of God's love toward the sinner. Only after he had established that premise did he turn his attention to the question of what sin is. He admitted that it might be defined as a corruption of nature (the Eislebeners

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[95] "Unser Elend ist/ das wir arme verirrete Schafe/ verlorne Groschen/ und ungerathene Söne/ und Töchter sein/ die wir uns nicht können zu rechte finden/ sondern würden/ und müsten unser halben verirret/ verlorn/ und in Sünden/ darinnen wir empfangen und geboren sind/ unter der Gewalt des Teufels/ und ewigen Todes verloren und verdampt sein/ und bleiben/ wo uns nicht durch diesen trewen Hirten/ und frommen Vater daraus/ aus Gnade geholffen würde." Mencel, *Vier Christliche Predigten*, 83.

[96] "Und [sie] nennen nicht/ Sünde oder Erbsünde den Menschen/ oder des Menschen Natur/ fur und an sich selbs. Denn hie unterscheiden sie zwischen Natur und Verderbung/ zwischen Menschen und Sünde." Mencel, *Vier Christliche Predigten*, 87.

position) or everything contrary to the law (the Mansfelders position). But in either case, God's love for the sinner necessitates a hard and fast distinction between sin and the human being. The implication was that anyone taking the Mansfelder position did not believe in God's love for sinful humankind. Mencel's sermon was neither a technical, detailed, methodical explication of the Eislebener position on original sin, nor was it didactic in the traditional sense. It did not presuppose or require deep knowledge of theology. Nor was it an effort to bring the laity into the realm of the theologians. Rather it spoke on a simple level while making a theological point, a strategy in keeping with the Eislebeners' approach to the laity.

But as ultimate winners of the controversy, and in accordance with another aspect of their approach to the laity, the Eislebeners had another weapon in their arsenal: they could take a decidedly authoritarian tone. Following the expulsion of Spangenberg and his colleagues in early 1575, the Eislebeners turned their attention to reintegrating into the territory's church those laity who had sided with the Mansfelders. In addition to the investigations, consistory processes, and parish visitations undertaken for this purpose,[97] one sermon and one treatise directed at the lay followers of the Mansfelders have survived, both characterized by an assertion of authority coupled with the threat of punishment.

The sermon, preached by Mencel at the funeral of Simon Musaeus, the pastor installed as Spangenberg's successor in Tal Mansfeld, focused on the divine retribution that would follow from the Mansfelder laity's rejection of their new Eislebener pastor. Mencel took as his text, II Peter 2:7–9.

> And [God] delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds); the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.

After recounting the standard litany of heretical implications posed by the Mansfelder definition of original sin, Mencel compared Musaeus to Lot and the laity of Tal Mansfeld to the Sodomites. In both cities the people, captivated by Satan, lost all reason, turned into beasts following only their devilish lusts. Like the Sodomites who never desired

[97] See chapter 5, "The 'Heretics' of Mansfeld."

Lot as their minister, explained Mencel, "when Musaeus first arrived, you [people of Tal Mansfeld] received him with derisive notes and a dishonorable demeanor. And you behaved in a manner that demonstrated you would rather he was many miles away than here with you."[98] The Sodomites had tormented Lot with shameful whorings. "You have done the same to your dean and pastor with spiritual whorings, defending the shameful, blasphemous teachings on original sin, which you sucked out of your seductive pastors like poison dangerous to the soul…,"[99] thundered Mencel. The Sodomites had finally resorted to the use of force. How can you argue that whistling at Musaeus's wife and children during the daytime and throwing stones against his house in the nighttime is not the use of force, queried Mencel. And when Musaeus asked those in a dance hall (*Tantzhause*) next door to his home to quiet down, continued Mencel, not only did they refuse, "but they came over in front of his house and began such shouting, yelling, plucking, and beating of drums that it was as if they wanted to shatter him with noise."[100] Mencel concluded his sermon with the warning that Lot was saved by the angels, but the Sodomites were showered with hellfire. The implications were unmistakable: God would visit divine retribution upon the populace of Tal Mansfeld should they fail to accept their proper spiritual authorities. The sermon was a powerful assertion of clerical authority by the superintendent.

In the pamphlet addressed to "his dear parishioners," Georg Autumnus, Musaeus's successor as dean and pastor in Tal Mansfeld, made a similar point concerning that city's failure to obey their God-given authority, this time their temporal ruler, the administrator of the archdiocese of Magdeburg. Autumnus admonished his parishioners

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[98] "Wie er kaum ankommen war/ hat man ihn mit Pasquillen/ und Schandgetichten entpfangen/ Und sich also vernemen lassen/ das man lieber wolte/ er were uber viel Meil weges von euch/ denn nahe bey euch." Hieronymus Mencel, *Eine Predigt/ uber den Spruch Petri. 2. Gott hat den gerechten Loth/ etc. bey der christlichen Begrebnis/ des ehrwirdigen und hoch gelarten Herrn Simonis Musaei/ der heiligen Schrifft Doctores/ und mansfeldischen Decani* (Halle: Urban Gaubisch, 1577), 31.

[99] "Ir habts ewren Herrn Decano und Pfarrherrn mit der Geistlichen Hurerey auch gethan/ das ir die schendliche Gotteslesterische Lere von der Erbsünde die ir aus ewren verführischen Predigern/ als ein gefehrliche Seelen Gifft gesogen/ trotzlich verteidiget…." Mencel, *Eine Predigt/ Uber der Spruch 2 Petri 2*, 39–40.

[100] "…Sondern das man noch darüber/ eben vor seiner Wohnung furüber gegangen und ein solch juchen/ schreyen/ plecken/ und Drommelschlagen angefangen/ als wolte man sich mit schreyen zureissen…." Mencel, *Eine Predigt/ Uber der Spruch 2 Petri 2*, 41–42.

to honor their superiors who, he insisted, were responsible for ensuring pure doctrine in their lands. It is proper and praiseworthy, he continued, "when a pious, Christian authority, still today, publicly abolishes godless, damaging, troublesome teachings that are against the word of God,… by means of [the authority's] faithful industry and earnest Christian mandates…."[101] Attached to the pamphlet was a copy of the administrator's censure of the Mansfelders, condemning their teachings and commanding their followers to return to the orthodox church. It ended with the following threat:

> Furthermore, should anyone be found who is sullied with this error, who spreads the same wanton and persistent teaching, defends it, or in some way supports it, we should be informed. That person will be dealt with by us, certainly and solemnly punished either with prison or with corporal punishment according to the circumstances.[102]

The message was clear. The temporal authorities have, according to their duty, deemed the Mansfelder position heretical. Those who refused to accept their judgment would be harshly punished.

Conclusion

The words and actions of the Mansfelders and Eislebeners vis-à-vis the laity reveal two distinct ecclesiologies, each rooted in a different understanding of the lucidity of Scripture and the enlightening power of faith. For the Mansfelders, because the Scriptures were clear, because

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[101] "…Wenn frome Christlich Obrigkeit/ noch heute bey tage/ Gottlose schendliche ergerliche Lere/ welche Gottes Wort zuwider ist/…durch ihren trewen fleis und ernste Christliche Mandata abschaffet…." Georg Autumnus, *Warnung und Vermanung Georgii Autumni/ Pfarherrn und Decani im Thal Mansfeldt/ an alle seine liebe Pfarkinder/ und andere/ so mit dem Manicheischen schwarm/ M. Spangenbergs irre gemacht und eingenomen sind. Sampt Warhafftigem Abdruck/ des Durchlautigsten Hochgebornen Fürsten und Herrn/ Herrn Joachim Friedrichen/ Postulierten Administratoris des Primats und Ertzstiffts Magdeburg/ Marggraven zu Brandenburg/ etc. unsers gnedigsten Fürsten und Herrn/ Offnen Mandats/ wider M. Spangenberg/ und seinen anhang/ Auch endlicher antwort/ S. F. G. Hofrethe/ auf die Dedications seines Büchleins Entdeckung/ und freventliche anziehung und misdeutung solches Fürstlichen Mandats* (Eisleben: Andreas Petri, 1580), 4–5.

[102] "Do den darüber jemands befunden/ so mit solchem Irthumb beflecket/ denselben also ferner mutwillig und beharlichen Leren/ ausbreiten/ verteidigen/ oder auch sonsten beypflichten würde/ uns solchs berichten. Sollen dieselbige von uns wircklichen und ernstliche mit schwerer straff/ nach gelegenheit mit Gefengnis oder am Leibe belegt werden." Autumnus, *Warnung und Vermanung*, 19.

faith trumped the intellect, and because each individual was responsible for knowing and proclaiming proper doctrine, the controversy had to be articulated to the laity. Indeed, judging the orthodoxy of doctrine was a key role they were expected to play, a vision of the church that was egalitarian, and for the laity, empowering. The Mansfelders were savvy enough to realize that they must aim the various forms of media they employed at a spectrum of laity with differing intellectual abilities. But in the final analysis, they expected and encouraged each parishioner to achieve some basic level of doctrinal understanding. For those laity who desired an active role in the church and who took theology seriously, the Mansfelders' proposition to become involved would hold significant appeal.

For a variety of reasons the Eislebeners understood the role of the laity in the church quite differently. Because the Scriptures could be confusing and difficult, those trained to understand them were in the best position to adjudicate their meaning. The role of the laity, then, was to passively receive the wisdom of the learned and respect the authority of the church leaders, a much more hierarchical vision of the church. Within the context of the controversy over original sin, this translated into an approach toward the laity that was generally one of reserve. The Eislebeners responded only in the face of the Mansfelder challenge, and then were on the defensive most of the time. And although Mencel and his colleagues offered information on the doctrinal underpinnings of their position to the laity, their tendency was not to educate the commoners in the intricacies of theology but to speak to them on a level that they, the clerics, considered appropriate. Finally, when addressing the lay folk committed to the Mansfelder position after the invasion of Tal Mansfeld, the Eislebeners employed a decidedly authoritarian tone. Parishioners were to be docile, respectful of the higher education of their pastors, without pretensions to participate in doctrinal debates, and they were required to obey the authority of the state. These two distinct views of the laity and their role in the church would have as much impact on the people as the content of the debate, thereby revealing an important aspect of lay religiosity during the early modern period.

It is also worth noting that most often the authoritarian, hierarchical model triumphed in Protestant territories during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, as proponents of the confessionalization thesis would be quick to point out. But we might also add a note of caution in this regard, as a reminder that alternative views did exist,

some of which had committed advocates among the clergy and held significant appeal among the laity.

Having analyzed the intellectual content of the debate as well as the message and means used to engage the commoners—topics addressed from the perspective of the clerics—we now turn our attention explicitly to the laity in order to answer the question, what does the controversy over original sin in Mansfeld tell us about lay religiosity? Among the laity most active in the conflict were the counts who ruled the territory, and because of their unique status, they are afforded their own chapter. Numbering as many as nine at certain points in the late sixteenth century, seven counts hailing from all three dynastic lines were closely involved in the controversy. With exceptions noted below, the Vorderort counts supported Mencel and the Eislebeners, while the Hinterort and Mittelort counts defended Spangenberg and the Mansfelders.

In some ways, their close involvement in the controversy is not surprising, as structural links between church and state were a hallmark of the period.[103] Yet, the extent to which the counts of Mansfeld participated exceeds any expectations that "structural links" alone might explain. The counts admonished the theologians to unity, called colloquia to promote consensus, enforced or opposed the edicts of the superintendent, used their *ius patronatus* to expel pastors with whom they disagreed, claimed the right to judge orthodox doctrine in their own lands, and closed churches to keep "heretical" pastors from preaching. In some cases, they themselves took part in colloquia, composed theological pamphlets, helped to establish a counter or oppositional church, and protected clergy and laity who had been

[103] This assertion is a central component of the confessionalization thesis, which Heinz Schilling has described concisely as follows: "Das Konzept der "Konfessionalisierung,…beruht auf der Tatsache, daß in Alteuropa—im Mittelalter nicht anders als in der frühen Neuzeit—Religion und Politik, Staat und Kirche strukturell miteinander verzahnt waren, das unter den spezifischen Bedingungen der frühneuzeitlichen Vergesellschaftung Religion und Kirche nicht historische Teilphänomene waren, sondern das Gesamtsystem der Gesellschaft abdeckten und zentrale Achsen von Staat und Gesellschaft bildeten. Besonders dicht war die Verflechtung in der Reformationsepoche und im anschließenden konfessionellen Zeitalter." Heinz Schilling, "Die Konfessionalisierung im Reich: Religiöser und gesellschaftlicher Wandel in Deutschland zwischen 1555 und 1620," Luise Schorn-Schütte and Olaf Mörke, eds., *Ausgewählte Abhandlungen zur europäischen Reformations- und Konfessionsgeschichte* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2002), 504–40, here at 505; cf. Lotz-Heuman, "Confessionalization," 137–143.

declared heretical by the official church. Their reasons for becoming so deeply involved in the controversy and for choosing different sides in the debate will demonstrate the complex combination of factors that worked together to shape these laymen's and laywomen's (multiple countesses were involved) religiosity.

As might be expected, however, political considerations played a central role, three in particular. First, all counts held the right in common to decide the territory's confession, a scenario rife with potential for abuse: religion could easily become a venue in which to push for personal or political advantage. Second, neither side (backing the Eislebeners nor Mansfelders) was powerful enough to impose its will, so that after two and a half years of infighting, the struggle deadlocked both theologically and politically. Resolution required intervention of external forces, in this case Mansfeld's feudal lords. And third, during this period, these lords, particularly Elector August of Saxony, were endeavoring to expand their influence in the territory by crippling the power of the counts.

Because the controversy over original sin was intimately bound up with inter-territorial politics, the next chapter will begin with a brief sketch of Mansfeld's political situation over against its larger neighbors, before turning to the actions and writings of the counts within the context of the territory. It will become clear that, in addition to the political influences coming from outside, the counts who supported the Eislebeners and those who defended the Mansfelders functioned under two distinct understandings of the role and responsibility of a Christian prince in the religious affairs of his territory. Moreover, divergent family histories, differing self-conceptions, and personal relationships with specific theologians further influenced the counts. But in the end, an interest in theology also played a distinct role on both sides as a key component of an active and meaningful religiosity—albeit one that was bound up in an intricate web of other factors.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE COUNTS AND THE CONTROVERSY

Electoral Saxony's Bid for Control of Mansfeld

The political issue that casts the longest shadow over the doctrinal controversy in Mansfeld was the elector of Saxony's bid to take control of the territory. During the second half of the sixteenth century, August made no secret of his ambitions to bring the smaller principalities surrounding Saxony under his direct authority. In 1557, he and the duke of Saxony decreed that the counts and lords of twelve nearby territories including Mansfeld were not only their vassals, but subjects and *Landsassen*, and were thus required to pay all taxes applicable to minor estates. Although the princes initially failed to enforce their edict, it foreshadowed August's increasing and in the end successful efforts at territorial expansion. Of the twelve territories in question, only the counts of Schwarzburg and Barby ultimately retained their autonomy.[1] When viewed from the perspective of the elector's campaign of regional expansion, the controversy over original sin becomes one vehicle to achieve his goal. A second was his efforts to impose a *Sequestration*, essentially a direct takeover of political power, justified by the counts' financial insolvency. Depending upon the comital line in question, the elector employed these two strategies to a greater or lesser degree.

Against the Vorderort counts the elector used their financial mismanagement and the resulting *Sequestration*. After 1550, drastic reductions in mining revenues had resulted in crushing debt for all the counts, but especially for those of the Vorderort line.[2] Under the contract agreed upon in 1501 when Mansfeld's dynasty was first divided

[1] The counts and lords in question were from Schwarzburg, Barby, Mansfeld, Gleichen, Stolberg, Hohenstein, Beichlingen, Kirchberg, Wildenfels, Schönburg, Reuss, and Schenk von Tautenburg. Karl Krumhaar, *Die Grafen von Mansfeld und Ihre Besitzungen* (Eisleben: Heinrich Reichardt, 1872), 54.

[2] For more on the economic changes see Wartenberg, "Die Mansfelder Grafen und der Bergbau," 29–42.

into three lines, if one line fell into insolvency, control over its holdings reverted to the two remaining lines. In this case, the Mittelort and Hinterort counts should have received jurisdiction over the Vorderort's three-fifths of the territory. But due to the exorbitant debt of all three lines, in 1566 the emperor selected a commission to investigate the territory's finances and rule on possible ways forward.

But August had different plans for Mansfeld. He protested to the emperor that the counts were not members of the imperial estates, but vassals who received their regalia from their feudal lords, namely himself, the administrator of the archdiocese of Magdeburg, and the administrator of the diocese of Halberstadt. Therefore regulation of Mansfeld's finances should fall to them, not the emperor.[3] The elector succeeded in his protest and established a commission composed of representatives of the three princes[4] to investigate the territory. Not only did the commission conclude that the counts owed their creditors 2,721,916 gulden excluding interest, but it publicized the fact that many of the counts' estates (*Güter*) had been purchased under the provision that, should they default on their loans, creditors could repossess them.[5] In fact, claimed the commission, this had begun to occur, making repayment almost impossible.[6]

On September 13, 1570, after protracted negotiations, the princes imposed a *Sequestration* or forced appropriation of the administration (*Zwangsverwaltung*) of the Vorderort three-fifths of the territory, by far the most deeply indebted dynastic line. The terms were as follows: the six Vorderort counts were compelled to relinquish their "entire goods and mines, along with their administration, government, jurisdiction, [right of] coercion, right to send embassies, [obligations of] service, and [right to] tax and succession to their three feudal lords."[7] In essence, this meant that the Vorderort counts lost all authority to

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[3] Krumhaar, *Die Grafen von Mansfeld und ihre Besitzungen*, 55–56.

[4] Unless referring to a specific ruler, the term *princes* in this chapter will designate Mansfeld's feudal lords.

[5] Ebruy, "Die Verwaltung der Grafschaft Mansfeld," 8.

[6] For example, the creditor Mannlich in Augsburg had given the counts a loan with the district of Arnstein as guarantee, Polleben creditors from Blankenburg lent money with Wiederstedt as guarantee, the von Schulenburg brothers with the town of Burgörner as guarantee, and the von Kerstenbruchs with the town of Helfta as guarantee. Krumhaar, *Die Grafen von Mansfeld und ihre Besitzungen*, 56.

[7] "…sämmtlichen Güter und Bergwerke mit deren Verwaltung, Regierung, Jurisdiction, Zwang, Botmässigkeit, Dienst, Steuer, Folge in die Hände der drei Lehnsherren übergeben." Quoted in Krumhaar, *Die Grafen von Mansfeld und ihre Besitzungen*, 56.

rule and went into private life, receiving an annual stipend on which to live.[8] They were to regain their former rights when they repaid their creditors, a scenario that never became a reality. Three of the six Vorderort counts accepted the *Sequestration* immediately; three fought it, insisting that due to their status as imperial counts, the case belonged in the imperial courts, not the elector's. But August was able to force his will, and in the end the emperor assented.[9]

The conditions of the *Sequestration* included measures that would be crucial during the controversy over original sin. Each feudal lord installed a supervisor (*Oberaufseher*) in the territory to represent his interests.[10] Electoral Saxony received three fourths of the Vorderort counts' holdings, while the last quarter was divided between the administrator of the archdiocese of Magdeburg and the administrator of the diocese of Halberstadt. The official transfer of power occurred in January of 1572, just as the controversy over original sin divided the territory's pastorate. As a result, the actions of the enervated Vorderort counts became closely tied to the will of the elector. For the Mittelort and Hinterort counts, the *Sequestration* meant that suddenly they had to contend with a major power with a strong foothold in the territory.

In 1573, August strengthened his hand by trading the administrator in Halberstadt diocesan lands in Mansfeld for Saxon holdings outside the territory. As a result, by 1573, in addition to the three quarters of the Vorderort holdings already under his control, the elector gained Eisleben and Hettstedt, two of the territory's three major cities. Only Tal Mansfeld, the third major city, remained outside his grasp, owing feudal allegiance to the administrator in Magdeburg. Other land swaps further strengthened the elector's position, so that by 1580, all of the

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[8] In the Leipzig *Hauptsequestration* (1570), the princes did not decide upon the specific amount of the stipend. At Erfurt (1571) it was set at 2,000 fl. per year, half at Easter and half at Michaelis, to be taken from the *Sequestration* chest at Eisleben. In addition to this income, the sequestered counts retained their castles and the gardens surrounding them, fisheries, and hunting rights (common to all counts); and at Erfurt in 1571, they were given ten acres of forest land each.

[9] Krumhaar, *Die Grafen von Mansfeld und ihre Besitzungen*, 56–57.

[10] The *Sequestration* brought with it a whole new layer of officials in Mansfeld: 3 supervisors (*Oberaufseher*, also referred to as *Sequestratoren* or *Oberverwalter*); 3 Secretaries (*Amtschreiber*), one for each supervisor; 1 tax collector (*Sequestrationsrentmeister*); 1 lawyer (*Doctor Juris*); and 1 secretary for the mining concerns (*Bergschreiber*). The salaries of these officials were paid from the taxes collected by the sequestering princes, monies that were therefore not applied to the repayment of the creditors. As these salaries increased over the years, the Vorderort counts protested, arguing futilely that the money should be used to repay their loans.

counts of Mansfeld had become *Landsassen*, having lost their status as imperial counts. As one historian has put it, "Around the year 1580, Mansfeld ceased to be an independent territory. The counts of the Vorderort had gone from ruling lords to merely private individuals during the course of the *Sequestration*. The counts of the Mittelort and Hinterort were mediatized."[11]

The *Sequestration* is part of the wider context necessary to understand the actions of the counts during the conflict over original sin. By 1572 the Vorderort counts, already beholden to the elector of Saxony, had essentially been sidelined, although they still attempted to influence the outcome of the controversy. Furthermore, by 1573 the cities of Eisleben and Hettstedt were both under the direct control of the elector, while the city of Tal Mansfeld fell to the less powerful administrator of the archdiocese of Magdeburg. During the controversy, the Vorderort counts, as well as the pastors of Eisleben and Hettstedt (not to mention those clerics in the remainder of the territory under the elector's control), had good political reasons to side with the elector's theologians. Conversely, the Mittelort and Hinterort counts, fighting for their political survival, had equally good reasons to take a position contrary to that of the elector's theologians in order to underscore their autonomy as heads of the church (and therefore, state) in Mansfeld.

If using deficient finances was August's means for subverting the Vorderort counts, the controversy over original sin gave him an instrument to bring the Hinterort counts to heel. In fact, interactions between the princes and the Hinterort counts over the issue of original sin were almost exclusively a question of political maneuvering, despite the counts' repeated efforts to push the theological question to the center. For both sides, the controversy represented an opportunity to assert a political agenda: for the princes (and especially the elector) their expansionist policies; for the Hinterort line, a defense of their status as imperial counts.

Following the Eisleben Colloquium 1572, a purely internal Mansfeld affair, the Eislebeners along with the Vorderort counts, requested opinions (*Gutachten*) from theologians in nearby territories regarding

[11] "Um das Jahr 1580 hört Mansfeld auf, eine selbständige Grafschaft zu sein; die Grafen des Vorderorts sind in Folge der Sequestration aus regierenden Herren blosse Privateleute geworden; die Grafen des Mittel- und Hinterorts sind mediatisirt." Krumhaar, *Die Grafen von Mansfeld und Ihre Besitzungen*, 58.

Spangenberg's understanding of original sin. Among the first to respond was Joachim Frederick, the administrator of the archdiocese of Magdeburg, who informed the counts in a letter accompanying the judgement of his theologians that the teachings of Spangenberg were false, and that he, "…as *Landesfürst* and feudal lord, would not be coerced into allowing such shameful teachings and errors to enter [his lands]."[12] Electoral Saxony's theologians likewise condemned the Mansfelder position.

As tensions increased inside the territory and counts on both sides of the debate began to expel pastors who had taken positions opposite their own, the administrator enlisted the help of the elector. Prevented from taking unilateral action against the Mansfelder party by the fact that their headquarters were in Tal Mansfeld, a city under the authority of the administrator, the elector jumped at the chance to insert himself. In late 1573, the two princes began discussions about how to end the controversy. In his initial letter to the elector, the administrator described the state of affairs in the territory, voicing particular irritation that the Mittelort and Hinterort counts had become directly involved in the debate, provoking a struggle between the dynastic lines and drawing the common people into the controversy. He lamented, "from this [beginning] there is nothing more certain than that a shameful uproar and a bloodbath will eventually follow."[13] To support his claim, the administrator cited the example of the commotion caused when the Hinterort counts, Volrad and Carl, had expelled Eislebener pastors from the churches in Eisleben where these counts held *ius patronatus* and replaced them with Mansfelder pastors: "the people fled the churches uproariously, out of control, screaming wildly. They were preparing to throw manure and stones at the counts and the new pastors."[14]

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[12] "…nun als dem lehens und Landesfürst, nicht gezwengen wil, solche schedeliche lehre und Irrthumb einreissen zulassen." Joachim Frederick, administrator of the archdiocese of Magdeburg, to the Vorderort counts, January 5, 1573. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, 830, fol. 108r.

[13] "Darauss dan entlich nicht gewissers dan ein schedtlicher uffruhe und Blutbath erfolgen mochte." Joachim Frederick, administrator of the archdiocese of Magdeburg, to August, elector of Saxony, December 31, 1573. Dresden, Loc. 9756/ 13, fol. 56r–v.

[14] "…das die Leute aus der Kirchen mit grossen geschrey, Thumult, und ungestumigkeit gelauffen, etzliche aber mit Koth und steinen, so woll auff die Graven als die newen eingefurtte Predigern zu werffen im forhaben gewesen." Joachim Frederick, administrator of the archdiocese of Magdeburg, to August, elector of Saxony, December 31, 1573. Dresden, Loc. 9756/ 13, fol. 56v.

In early March of 1574, the two princes summoned the Hinterort counts, Volrad and Carl, to appear in Halle to give an account of the situation,[15] to which the counts reacted defiantly, waiting three weeks to respond, then refusing on two grounds. First, they argued, the princes had failed to follow proper protocol and produce precise information regarding the charges against them, failures that released them from any obligation to heed the citation.[16] Second, they claimed that as imperial counts they were duty-bound to appear only before the emperor; to obey orders from any other prince would result in a diminution of the emperor's rights.[17] Moreover, they insisted that if the princes had doctrinal differences with their pastors and theologians, the proper format to discuss them would be a colloquium.

Their response did not deter the princes, who commanded their councilors to be prepared on the day specified in the citation, should the counts change their minds and appear. The elector sent directives to his councilors for the proposed hearing, an examination of which demonstrates where his interests lay and what tactics he would employ. Should the counts materialize, they were to answer the following accusations: they had incited the miners and other laity with their speeches and writings; they had scorned the elector's and the administrator's commands as demonstrated by the pasquils published throughout the territory; they had published open mandates in which they attempted to appropriate the elector's *ius patronatus* and had encroached on other aspects of princely authority; they had willfully

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[15] August, elector of Saxony, and Joachim Frederick, administrator of the archdiocese of Magdeburg, to Hinterort counts, Volrad and Carl, March 10, 1574. Dresden, Loc. 9756/ 13, fol. 68v–70r.

[16] "so befindenn wir auch diese vormeinte bezichtigung und auflagen, damit wir durch unsere Mißgunstige, bey E. Chur. und F. G. seindt belestiget und angeben (derenn uns gleichwol dem ublichen gebrauch nach keine vonn Wheme sie herrurende oder welcher gestald sie intentiret angehendiget worden) dermassen und also geschaffen, und wir derenthalb fur E. Churf. und F. G. nicht zu Conveniren oder zuandtwortten schuldigt." Hinterort counts, Volrad and Carl, to August, elector of Saxony, and Joachim Frederick, administrator of the archdiocese of Magdeburg, April 19, 1574. Dresden, Loc. 9756/ 13, fol. 119r–v.

[17] There is good evidence that at some point during these procedings Count Volrad refused to accept the administrator as his lawful feudal lord, arguing that Joachim Frederick had not recieved his position lawfully and that he had not been confirmed by the emperor in it. In a report from the elector to the administrator, the elector wrote, "…dan wir werden berichtet, als solte Graff Volrad dem Administratoren zugeschrieben haben, das er S. L. vor keinen Lehen Herren erkente, weil S. L. nicht ordentlicher weiß das stifft erlanget und das Heilig Reich darein nicht Consentiret." Dresden, Loc. 9756/ 13, fol. 97r.

defied the princes by capturing, binding, and imprisoning those individuals from the elector's feudal lands whom he was sworn to protect; and finally, the counts had disobeyed the terms of the *Sequestration* regarding control of the mines in Mansfeld.[18] It is noteworthy that on both sides the theological component of the controversy is almost non-existent. The counts argued a failure of protocol and imperial rights, while paramount among the elector's concerns were the counts' interference with his rights, potential social unrest, the counts' failure to follow the rule of law, and their decision not to obey him in mining issues and *Sequestration* decisions. In other words, for each side the controversy was primarily an issue of power relations.

As the standoff continued, the issue of the counts' imperial status became increasingly central. When they failed to appear in Halle as per the summons, the elector's advisors noted to their master that it was because "…they do not acknowledge Your Electoral Grace and the administrator as their *ordinarios Judices*."[19] Irate at this claim, the elector suggested simply arresting Count Volrad, but the administrator's advisors hesitated, worried

> that he might call on the imperial letter of protection, and if their lord, the administrator should attempt some very serious action against him, perhaps [the count] would protest to the emperor. Or he might raise some objection along the lines that His Princely Grace [the administrator] is not yet confirmed in the archdiocese, which according to the opportunity provided by this issue, [the count] would not allow to be forgotten.[20]

These fears suggest that the administrator did not consider his own position particularly strong, nor the Hinterort counts' situation particularly weak. If the counts protested to the emperor, the administrator would have real problems, in part because of their imperial status and

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[18] Elector August's instructions to his councilors, April 24, 1574. Dresden, Loc. 9756/13, fol. 97v–98r.

[19] "…das E. Churf. G. und den Administratorn sie fur Ihre *ordinarios Judices* nicht erkenne." The elector of Saxony's councilors to the elector, April 27, 1574. Dresden, Loc. 9756/13, fol. 122v.

[20] "…das ehr sich auch keyßerlicher Schutz brief ruhmete, Und do von Ihrem Herren dem Administratorn ein ernst wider Ihnen vorgenommen werden soltte, das villeicht Clagen an die Keyß. Mayt. abstorderung, oder dergleichen erfolgen möchten, so dan S. F. G. alß der zum Ertzstift nicht confimiret, vornemblich zuerwegen, daßen auch gleichwoll nach gelegenheit der sachen sie uns unerinert nicht laßen könnten. Dresden, Loc. 9756/13, fol. 123v.

in part because the emperor had not yet confirmed him as administrator of the archdiocese.

But the counts also attempted to push the issue of doctrine closer to the center of the conflict. In a letter responding to the princes' accusations and enumerating their reasons for disobeying the summons, they claimed they had not expelled orthodox preachers, but clerics who had strayed into heresy. Moreover, because their enemies had tarred them with the brush of Manichaeism, the counts enclosed two of their own confessions as proof of orthodoxy.[21] It was not them, claimed the counts, but Mencel and his comrades who had incited the miners with their preaching and pamphlets. Regarding pasquils, exclaimed Count Volrad, he knew of none written against the princes, only those written against *him*.[22] The counts claimed that they had neither despised nor scorned the princes' mandates. Admittedly they had opposed princely commands, but always via legal means. With regard to the religious issue, their opponents' repeated attacks had compelled the counts to respond.[23] Finally, the counts urged the convocation of a synod to address the doctrinal issue, threatening that failure would result in them taking their grievances to the emperor.

This reply brought the confrontation to a stalemate. Again the princes considered boldly arresting Count Volrad, but the administrator was still nervous about possible repercussions with the emperor.[24] All plans languished until late July when the administrator finally took action, this time unilaterally. His efforts, it seems, were spurred by actions

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[21] The two pamphlets outlined their position on the issue of original sin. Counts Volrad and Carl, *Der Wolgebornen und Edlen Herrn/ Herrn Volraths und Herrn Carols des Eltern/ gebrüdern/ Graven und Herren zu Mansfelt/ für sich/ Auch wegen Irer Unmündigen Vettern/ etc.: Entliche Erklerung/ sampt gründlicher beweisung der Falschen Lere und Irthumbs/ etzlicher Prediger in der Graffschafft Mansfelt von der Erbsünde/ etc. Mit Ausfürung Christlicher notwendiger ursachen/ Warumb Ir Gnaden Gottes befelich nach/ solch Falsche Lere in Irer Gnaden Kirchen und Schulen abzuschaffen/ und lenger nicht zuleiden schüldig sind* (Mansfeld: n.p., 1573); and Count Volrad, *Bestendige/ und in Gottes Wort gegründte Bekentnis: Der Rechten/ reinen unnverfelschten Lere von der Erbsünde/ wie die von dem thewren Manne Gottes/ Doctor Martin Luther/ wider das Antichristlische Bapstumb erstritten und erhalten worden* (Mansfeld: Andreas Petri, 1574). These pamphlets are discussed more fully in part three of this chapter.

[22] Again the counts enclosed examples, which they mention in their letter, but which are unfortunately missing from the file.

[23] This was most likely a reference to their decision to ignore the elector's ban on the printing of polemical works regarding the issue of original sin promulgated already on April 19, 1572. Spangenberg, *Historia*, 45.

[24] Report of electoral Saxony's representative to the elector, May 26, 1574. Dresden, Loc. 9756/13, fol. 156v.

taken by the Vorderort counts, who took the unprecedented step of notifying the administrator's father, the elector of Brandenburg, of the situation. A dangerous theological controversy had crept into their territory, they wrote. Opinions from theologians in the surrounding territories had condemned the Mansfelders, but they continued their polemics despite the administrator's repeated orders to desist. Now their lay followers refused to swear fealty to the administrator, repudiating his commissioners sent to Tal Mansfeld to receive their homage. The Vorderort counts then made a statement that undoubtedly hit a nerve with this princely father: they "…have forgotten their oath and duties to the highly esteemed administrator, our gracious lord and feudal lord and to us,"[25] while at the same time instigating horrible divisions in the church and government. Undoubtedly, concluded the counts, the administrator would recognize the problem and address the situation on his own, but "because we see that His Princely Grace discusses such and similar important issues with Your Electoral Grace, as his beloved fatherly advisor and councilor,"[26] the counts asked that the elector raise this issue with his son. Shortly after this letter reached Brandenburg, the administrator invaded Tal Mansfeld, expelled the Mansfelder pastors, and led the entire city council away in chains.[27]

In the end, the elector of Saxony played no direct role in these events. Rather the elector of Brandenburg's paternal urgings seem to have spurred the young administrator to action, who, only after the invasion, explained to the elector of Saxony why he had taken this step. He noted that the unrest in Tal Mansfeld had been a direct result of Spangenberg and his Manichaean heresy and that in order to avoid chaos, emergency measures had to be taken for, "We have also discovered that Spangenberg and his adherents, without fail, not only take great pains over the miners and poor farmers, but also individuals of higher standing. He draws them to himself and strengthens his position, all of which appear to be [preparations] for a secret uproar

[25] "…Eydt und Pflichten an hochgedachte Herrn Administrator U. Gn. H. als den Lehenherren und uns vergessen." The Vorderort counts to the elector of Brandenburg, July 23, 1574. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 16r.

[26] "Dieviel wir es aber dafur achten, das S. F. G. in solchen und dergleichen wichtigen sachen mit E. Churf. G. als derselben geliebten Herrn Vatter, Radt und vorwissen…." The Vorderort counts to the elector of Brandenburg, July 23, 1574. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 17r.

[27] For a full account of these events, see chapter six, "Extra-doctrinal Forces Affecting the Laity," esp. [203–216].

and instigation."[28] In order to suppress a potentially volatile situation, explained the administrator, he had occupied Tal Mansfeld, expelled the Mansfelder pastors, and captured the ringleaders of the unrest.

Considered from the perspective of inter-territorial politics, the controversy over original sin centered in large part on the Saxon elector's efforts to exert control over the Hinterort counts and those counts' desire to retain their autonomy. The conflict offered the elector an opportunity to pry the counts loose from the emperor's protection, for it necessitated, or could be represented as necessitating, emergency measures. In fact, the events did not go according to the elector's plan, as the administrator eventually took unilateral action. Nonetheless, the elector achieved the desired result. Count Volrad left the territory never to return, and although Count Carl attempted to protect the Mansfelders and their lay followers, he too eventually fell in line and accepted the elector's new and powerful position in the territory. For the Hinterort counts the controversy represented an opportunity to assert their autonomy as heads of the church in Mansfeld and as imperial counts. Their defiant tone early on suggests that in the beginning, they saw the incident as an occasion to flex their muscles. But as the controversy proceeded they became less bold. In his last letter to the elector prior to the invasion of Tal Mansfeld, Count Carl all but begged the prince to call a colloquium to settle the controversy. He understood the gravity of his situation too late.[29]

If the *Sequestration* offered the elector of Saxony the opportunity to subdue the Vorderort counts, and the controversy over original sin gave him a chance to break the Hinterort counts, this left only the Mittelort count, Christoff, who the princes generally grouped together with his Hinterort cousins.[30] But because Christoff supported the

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[28] "Wir auch ferner befunden, das Spangenbergk und andere seine adhaerenten ohne underlaß nicht allein bey den Berg Knapen und armen Paursleuten, Sondern andern hohen Standes personen, dahin sich hefftig bemuhet, wie Er dieselben an sich ziehen und damit sterker machte, welchs alles fur ein heimlich uffruhe und uffwiglung sich ansehen lassen." Administrator of the archdiocese of Magdeburg to the elector of Saxony, February 1, 1575. Dresden, Loc. 8517/1, fol. 27r–v.

[29] Count Carl to the elector of Saxony, December 18, 1574. Dresden, Loc. 9756/13, fol. 198r.

[30] One of August's representatives told the administrator regarding Count Volrad, "…Wann die vorhaftung mit seiner person geschehen, es wurde sein bruder Graf Carell und auch Graff Christoff baldt zu gehorsam zubringenn seinn, Sintemahl sunderlich Graf Carell ihres wessens weiter gegenn der Administrator nicht verbrochenn,

Mansfelders only indirectly, the elector could do little to attack him in this regard. But while the Hinterort counts were bearing the brunt of the elector's displeasure over the controversy, Count Christoff was locked in his own struggle with August. In autumn or early winter of 1574, just prior to the administrator's invasion of Tal Mansfeld, the elector made a series of formal accusations against the count. The first reference to this incident comes from a letter dated January 31, 1575, but indicates some prehistory.[31] Two weeks later, the elector ordered his council to compile a list of incidents in which Christoff had displeased him, including "all the religious and other issues in which the count opposed us and demonstrated himself to be disobedient, along with our reproaches. These should be collated, quickly checked, and a summary should be made and immediately sent to us."[32] After the elector received the list, he summoned the count before his electoral council demanding answers for his misdeeds.[33] The list included: not allowing certain clerics (Mencel and Spangenberg) to appear before the Dresden consistory in 1568 for their scathing critiques of Saxony's theologians; protesting against the elector's role in removing Flacian pastors from Mansfeld's districts under the count's control; involving himself in questions regarding the minting of coins in Mansfeld over which he had no authority; disputing the elector's rights within the territory; repeatedly failing to appear when cited before the elector's council; and failing to pay certain dues in a timely fashion.[34] Count Christoff answered each of these charges in a letter to the elector declaring himself innocent on all counts.[35]

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dann das er sich Graf Volrad furnemlich in dem Theologischen Handelnn anhengig gemacht und die schriften so Graf Volradt in denselben und andernn sachen mehre vorfertigt, mit underschrieben und gesiegeldt." Dresden, Loc. 9756/13, fol. 159r–v.

[31] In this letter, Christoff denied that he had been disobedient to the elector, inferring that August had accused him of such. Count Christoff to the elector of Saxony, January 31, 1575. Dresden, Loc. 9742/20, fol. 37v.

[32] "…alle hierzu gehorige Hendel in Religion und andern sachen, darinnen sich der Graff etliche Jar herr uns widersetzigk und ungehorsam erzeiget, auch die vorhaltunge so etwan derowegen gefast sein soll, mit fleiß aufsuchen, einem Extracht daruß machen und uns forderlich zuschicken." The elector of Saxony to his councilors, February 19, 1575. Dresden, Loc. 9742/20, fol. 36v.

[33] The elector of Saxony to his council, May 28, 1575. Dresden, 9742/20, fol. 1v.

[34] Dresden Loc. 9742/20, fol. 40v–44r.

[35] Count Christoff to the elector of Saxony, May 31, 1575. Dresden Loc. 9742/29, fol. 19v–24v.

A lacuna in the sources makes it impossible to discover if these accusations were resolved, but from their nature, a few observations can be made about the case. First, no particular event appears to have initiated the proceedings, as indicated by the fact that the elector requested an inventory of the count's misdeeds. Second, the allegations went back seven years, suggesting that the elector was merely taking this moment to air complaints he had long held against the count. This prospect, in turn, raises serious questions about the validity of the allegations and the timing of their appearance. August seems to have sprung a series of cobbled-together charges on the count, at the same time as the administrator's soldiers invaded Tal Mansfeld, thereby throwing Christoff on the defensive at a point when he might have been expected to protest or to take more concrete actions against the princes for using force in Tal Mansfeld. A timely lawsuit containing a farrago of charges neutralized the count.

What is clear from the princes' actions over against the counts of Mansfeld and from the perspective of inter-territorial politics is that all parties understood the controversy over original sin as a political issue, and that the *Sequestration*, a fact for the Vorderort counts and a looming threat for the Hinterort and Mittelort counts, forms the backdrop to these events. Neither the elector nor the administrator demonstrated much interest in the theological debate, focusing rather on the political and social upheaval caused by the controversy and the Hinterort counts' failure to obey them—actions they construed as disobedience and defiance. By framing the controversy in these terms, the princes (August in particular) discovered a means by which to assert their authority in Mansfeld. The situation, they argued, necessitated emergency action, an interpretation that fit neatly into the elector's plan for gaining control of the territory. August used a combination of political and religious issues (which he politicized), challenging the emperor for the right to investigate the counts' financial affairs and sequestering the Vorderort counts, thereby crushing their political power, before turning his attention to the doctrinal upheaval.

In their dealings with the princes, the Vorderort counts also approached the controversy in Mansfeld as though it were entirely political in nature. Once they had secured *Gutachten* condemning the Mansfelders from theologians in nearby lands these counts made no attempt to revisit the question of doctrine. As with the princes, the issue became one of social disorder, specifically the citizens of Tal Mansfeld's

refusal to swear fealty to the administrator, and their Hinterort cousins' inciting of the same, as outlined in the Vorderort counts' complaint to the elector of Brandenburg. Although the Hinterort counts made some attempts to argue that the issue was theological by requesting that August convene a church council and by defending their own orthodoxy and that of their pastors, they too treated the controversy largely as a political issue. Refusing to answer citations because of their status as imperial counts and asserting their rights to dismiss pastors whom they deemed doctrinally heterodox demonstrated their political autonomy and *ius patronatus* in the face of August's encroachment. However, a closer look at the actions and writings of the counts reveal a variety of other forces and motivations were also at work.

The Hinterort and Mittelort Counts' Defense of the Mansfelders

Political factors alone cannot explain the actions of the Hinterort and Mittelort counts during the debate as it transpired within the territory, for they fail to answer why one of the Vorderort counts went against family policy and backed the Mansfelders, while one Hinterort countess did the same with the Eislebeners. Nor can they explain the Hinterort counts' extensive efforts to keep the Mansfelder teachings alive long after they had lost the political battle. Finally, they do not explain the Hinterort Count Carl's refusal to sign the article on original sin from *The Formula of Concord* for decades after the controversy. Clearly other forces were involved.

The counts who supported the Mansfelders require a brief introduction. Led by the Hinterort count, Volrad (1520–1578), this group included his younger brother, Count Carl the Elder (1533–1594), the Mittelort count, Christoff (d. 1591), and the Vorderort count, Hans Ernst (1520–1572). Volrad, the eldest son of the famous Count Albrecht (1480–1560), an early and lifelong supporter of Luther and the Protestants, had close ties to the early Reformation. Beginning at age fourteen Volrad studied at the University of Wittenberg along with his Mittelort cousin Christoff, where the two sat at Luther's feet. During the Schmalkald War, Volrad fought for the Protestants, taking part in the defense of Magdeburg (1549–1551) when that city was besieged by Catholic imperial forces. In 1569, he led German auxiliary troops in

France in support of the Huguenots against the Catholic armies, an act for which he won renown on the battlefield and praise from the theologian Johann Aurifaber for his dedication to the Protestant cause.[36] Volrad was both a warrior and an intellectual, who took great interest in the workings of the Protestant church and was deeply involved in its creation in Mansfeld.

Less is known about the other comital supporters of the Mansfelders. Carl appears to have followed Volrad's lead during the controversy, remaining a staunch supporter of the Mansfelders even after his brother's death.[37] Mittelort count, Christoff, was the only surviving son of Count Gebhard VII (d. 1557), who, along with his brother Count Albrecht, declared for the Reformation already in 1525. Christoff did not publicly support the Mansfelders, but demonstrated adherence to their cause through his semi-covert protection of their clergy and laity after the invasion of Tal Mansfeld in 1575.[38] Even less is known about the Vorderort count, Hans Ernst, who took the Mansfelders' side. His death in late 1572 cut short his role, leaving lingering questions about his motivations.

These four counts demonstrated their support for the Mansfelders in variety of ways. During the first half of the 1570s, Volrad published four pamphlets devoted to the doctrinal intricacies of the controversy and took active part in three colloquia, one of which he convened along with Hans Ernst. Even before the controversy began in Mansfeld, Volrad had accompanied Mencel and Spangenberg to Weimar in 1571, where they met fellow Gnesio-Lutherans in an effort to reach consensus over the issue of original sin.[39] After the Weimar Colloquium, Volrad left the territory, only to return a few days prior

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[36] "…da ihre Gnaden der armen Christenheit und volcklein Gottes in Frankreich dienen, das dieselben das seligmachende wortt gottes erhalten möchten. Und dieser Krieg in Frankreich, wen die Christen die Oberhandt behalten, kompt den Christen im deutschen lande zum besten. Dan wo die Papisten die Oberhandt behalten, hetten in diesem Königreiche, so hätte man das ganze Babstumb in deutschem lande wider anrichten wolln. Das ist ganz gewiss." Johann Aurifaber to Barbara von Mansfeld, in Max Könnecke, ed. "Ein Brief (Nebst Zeitungsauszug) des Pfarrers Johan Aurifaber an die Gräfin Barbara von Mansfeld," *Mansfelder Blätter* 11 (1897): 33.

[37] Count Carl's actions in this regard are discussed more fully in chapter five, "The 'Heretics' of Mansfeld."

[38] Count Christoff's actions in this regard are discussed more fully in chapter five, "The 'Heretics' of Mansfeld."

[39] See chapter two, "Competing Views of Original Sin and Associated Arguments and Meanings," esp. [61 ff.].

to the Eisleben Colloquium (1572). Upon learning of this assembly convened by the superintendent, Volrad immediately inquired whether he and the other counts might attend as observers.[40] In response, the clerics invited the counts from all three dynastic lines, but only Volrad, Carl, and Hans Ernst attended. In fact, Volrad appears to have assumed a leading role, as his chancellor, Alexander Spiessen, ran the colloquium. Moreover, at the beginning of the proceedings on the second day, wrote Spangenberg in his description of the colloquium, "our gracious lord, Count Volrad, briefly repeated what he had advised and admonished the previous day, [noting his] desire that we concern ourselves with finding consensus and remain unified."[41] Although he did not personally debate, clearly the count played a prominent role.

Volrad first articulated his own views on the doctrine of original sin in response to a 1572 letter from the theologian Johann Wigand. A native of Mansfeld and professor at Jena, Wigand had been a pastor at the Tal Mansfeld city church, and now he warned the counts against the Manichaeans and their leader, Spangenberg. Volrad took exception to this accusation, retorting, "As a child of this land, you could have served your fatherland much better than honoring it with such uninventive books,"[42] a reference to Wigand's book condemning Flacius that had ignited the debate in Mansfeld. The count then published his reply to Wigand.[43]

In the meantime, Flacius himself passed through Mansfeld, a coincidence that provided Volrad and Hans Ernst the opportunity to convene another colloquium. On one day's notice they summoned the leading Eislebeners to the fortress of Mansfeld on September 3, 1572 where, to their surprise, they found themselves sitting across the table from Flacius himself, who did not hesitate to ask them directly why they had called him a heretic. During this colloquium, Volrad actively participated in the debate, adding his own views on various

[40] Spangenberg, *Historia*, 75.

[41] "…hat unser gnediger Herr/ Graff Volrath kürzlich repetirt, was der den vorigen tag erinnern und vermanen lasset/ und nachmals begeret/ darauff wie man einig werden und bleiben möchte/ zu trachten." Spangenberg, *Historia*, 75.

[42] "Hette euch auch/ als einem Landkinde wol angestanden/ ewer Vaterlande besser denn mit solcher unerfindlichen Aufflagen zu ehren." Count Volrad, *Christliche und dapffere Antwort des Edlen und Wolgebornen Herrn H. Volradt, Graffen und Herrn zu Mansfeld, etc. Auf das Unchristliche Schreiben D. Wigandi.* (Oberursel: Henricus, 1573), 3.

[43] Volrad, *Christliche und dapffere Antwort*.

aspects of the doctrine of original sin. After the event, the Eislebener pastors published a treatise condemning the entire affair and insisting that they were unprepared and that Flacius had surprised them.[44] Volrad responded in 1573 with his second publication, an explanation of the circumstances under which the colloquium had taken place, correspondence over the doctrine of original sin with the Eislebener pastor and colloquium attendee, Fabricius, and the protocols of the discussions.[45]

Volrad's final two publications, published in 1574, also bear his brother Carl's name. The first begins with a history of the controversy, followed by a consideration of the doctrine of original sin in six parts. Volrad and Carl employed Luther's writings to support their views on each issue, while attempting to demonstrate from the writings of various Eislebeners that earlier they too had understood the issue as the counts did.[46] Volrad's and Carl's second publication of 1574 was a lengthy and detailed account of their understanding of original sin.[47] In this fifty-page work, the brothers offered a definition of original sin, provided evidence from the Scriptures and works of Luther for it, and demonstrated to their own satisfaction where other theologians (both from within the territory and without) had strayed from orthodox opinions.

Other actions taken during the controversy further demonstrate their commitment to the Mansfelders. When the administrator's troops marched into Tal Mansfeld a few months later Count Volrad was away, but upon his return he continued to support Spangenberg with an annual salary of 200 gulden until he, the count, died in 1578. After the invasion of Tal Mansfeld, Volrad established a Mansfelder community at *Newe Hütte*, a small hamlet just beyond the territory's borders. The group consisted of the count, his sons, Spangenberg and

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[44] The Eislebeners, *Vom Offentlichen Zeugnis, Matthiae Flacij Illyrici, welcher er das verlauffene 1572. jar, selbs durch den Druck ausgebreitet. Bericht, Etlicher Prediger zu Eisleben. Darinne…etliche newe, ergerliche,…Reden und Leren Illyrici,…zu vertheilen heimgestelt sind* (Eisleben: Urban Gaubisch, 1573).

[45] Count Volrad, *Bestendiger und Warhafftiger Gegenbericht/ wieder etlicher Theologen zu Eisleben/ seinen Gnaden in ihrem gedruckten Buch: Vom offentlichem Zeugnis Matt. Flacii Illyrici, etc. zugemessene unbilliche Auflagen. Beneben den Acten des Colloquii Anno 1572. den 3. und 4. Septemb. auff dem Hause Mansfelt. Uber dem Artickel von der Erbsünde gehalten/ warhafftig und trewlich gefasset* (n.p., 1573).

[46] Counts Volrad and Carl of Mansfeld, *Der wolgebornen und Edlen Herrn.*

[47] Counts Volrad and Carl of Mansfeld, *Bestendige/ und in Gottes Word gegründte Bekentnis.*

various other expelled clerics, and sporadic lay visitors who came to hear sermons and receive the sacraments.[48] Finally, following the invasion of Tal Mansfeld, Volrad lost his position as ruler in the territory[49] and went into exile in Strasbourg where he remained until his death.

Still inside the territory, Counts Carl and Christoff provided as much protection for the Mansfelder laity as they could. From 1572 to 1575, Carl allowed the Mansfelder clerics to preach, distribute the Eucharist, and perform baptisms and marriages in his house in Eisleben.[50] Throughout the second half of the 1570s, he and Christoff at times turned a blind eye to Mansfelder activities in their territories, at times provided them direct assistance. Christoff even employed the Mansfelder pastor, Johann Hainmuller, as his personal chaplain.[51]

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[48] A more extensive treatment of this community can be found in note [21] of chapter five, "The 'Heretics' of Mansfeld."

[49] This assertion is based upon the admittedly cryptic statement of Spangenberg, "Anno 1577 gebührete Graven Volrath die Gemeine Regierung im Thal Mansfeltt, haben aber die Hällischen weder ihm, noch seinen Räten, noch seinem Bruder Graven Carlen, noch G. Hansen hinterlassenen Söhnen es zulassen wollen." Spangenberg, *Mansfeldische Chronica*, in *Mansfelder Blätter* 30 (1916): 90.

[50] "Diese drei verlaufene Jahr über hat Gr. Carl der Älter zu Eißleben in seinem Hause auf der Neustadt predigen, communicieren, taufen und copulieren lassen, weil die islebischen Prädicanten seine und seines Bruders Gr. Volraths confession und alle, die sich zu der Bekenntnis des Spangenbergius, zu Weinmar Anno 1571 getan, beständiglich bekannt, als unrecht und ketzerisch verdammet und verworfen." Spangenberg, *Mansfeldische Chronica*, in *Mansfelder Blätter* 30 (1916): 99.

[51] On November 24, 1575 Mencel wrote to the princely council of the archdiocese of Magdeburg accusing Hainmuller of Mansfelder sympathies. The council was worried because they had heard that Count Christoff and his wife intended to name Hainmuller court preacher at their residence in Schraplau. Mencel offered the following assessment of the pastor's orthodoxy. He had commanded Hainmuller to compose a confession regarding his position on the issue of original sin with both theses and anti-theses. Hainmuller and pastors Johannes Volgen (Avianus) of Esperstedt and Johan Kestler of Alberstedt had refused. All three men hailed from the district of Schraplau and the latter two still adhered to Manichaean teachings. It was clear, continued the superintendent, that Hainmuller too was a Manichaean who had cut himself off from the orthodox official church. Mencel then offered the following proof regarding this assertion. First, Hainmuller would not agree with the censure of Spangenberg composed by the theologians from surrounding territories. He refused to distinguish between the human nature and its effects (*menschliche Natur und Wirkung*), that is the difference between the creature (which God made) and the original sin (which is the devil's work). Second, Hainmuller and his like-minded colleagues refused to sign the *Clarification*, a document written by their fellow pastors in the district of Schraplau that supported the Eislebener point of view. Rather the dissenters disputed the document vehemently (*heftig darüber exposulieren*). Third, other orthodox pastors in the district of Schraplau claimed that Hainmuller attacked them, the superintendent, and others among the territory's pastorate. As to the question whether Hainmuller should be allowed to become Count Christoff's official chaplain, Mencel

When the administrator from Magdeburg finally initiated a crackdown on the Mansfelder laity in 1581, Carl and Christoff were instrumental in forging a compromise between their subjects and the territory's official church.

Carl himself remained outside the church for two decades after the clerics' expulsion. Among the counts of Mansfeld, he alone never signed *The Book of Concord*, having received an exemption from the elector of Saxony.[52] Until November 1593, this refusal was tolerated in the territory, but at that time Georg Autumnus, the successor to Mencel as superintendent, explained to the count that, in light of his old age and declining health, he should consider whether or not he wished to die in the arms of the church. For the superintendent this meant signing *The Formula of Concord*'s article on original sin.[53] Between November 1593 and the end of January 1594, the count and superintendent exchanged a series of letters consisting of various statements written by the Carl regarding his understanding of original sin and their rejection by Autumnus and other members of the consistory.[54] Early in the proceedings, the count argued simplicity, insisting that he had not understood the issue. Autumnus responded,

> If Your Grace attempts to use the excuse of simplicity as [you did] yesterday, regarding the *Book of Concord* and the controversy over original sin, namely that it was too difficult to judge what is correct and incorrect, we will be forced to take a third way. We [will] examine your grace's public writings and mandates and demonstrate from them how learned you considered yourself at that time and [how you] could explain the issue [then].[55]

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advised the Magdeburg council against it. Mencel was convinced that Hainmuller was still wrapped up in the Manichaean enthusiasm and had heard that Hainmuller, Avianus, and other Manichaeans met frequently at Avianus's house. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 202, fols. 4v–8r.

[52] Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833 fols. 120r; and Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 127r.

[53] Georg Autumnus to Count Carl the Elder, November 15, 1593. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 105v–107r.

[54] The correspondence between the count and the church leaders can be found in Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 102v–144r.

[55] "Wurden e. g. aber nachmals, wie gestern geschehen ihre einfalt anziehen und vorwenden, das Concordienbuch undt der Streit von der Erbsünde, wehre ihr zu hoch davon zu Urtheilen, eines recht daß ander unrecht zu zeissen, so wirt das dritte kohmen, daß man wirt e. g. offentliche schriften undt Mandata vernehmen undt e. g. daraus zeigen mussen, wie gelert sie zum selbigen male gewust und die sache habe ausfuhren können." Georg Autumnus to Count Carl the Elder, December 18, 1593. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 103v–104r.

The battle of wills continued until January 31, 1594, when the count finally assented and signed a confession prepared by the pastors, accepting the *Formula of Concord*. He died two weeks later on February 17, 1594.

From their actions within the territory during and after the controversy, it is clear that the interests of these four counts, particularly Volrad and Carl, went well beyond inter-territorial politics. Their writings on the doctrine of original sin confirm this conclusion. Although they generally assumed the Mansfelder clergy's doctrinal views on original sin, their explanations demonstrated a high degree of sophistication and engagement with the central issues and doctrinal nuances of the debate. They were more than just mouthpieces for the clerics.

In his first pamphlet, Count Volrad defined human nature as "that which we are by nature without grace; what the flesh and the old Adam are before God, which without Christ and faith is truly nothing other than sin. Nor can it enter into heaven unless it die, crumble, arise, and be reborn to righteousness."[56] This formulation echoes Spangenberg but offers none of the technical details of his more complex writings.[57] Nor did Volrad analyze the transformation that took place as a result of original sin other than to note that the human being actually became sin. By the time he wrote his final confession in 1574, however, like the Mansfelder clerics, the count began with I John 3:4, arguing that sin was everything contrary to the law of God. He then divided sin into its two manifestations, original sin and actual sin. Original sin

> was an extremely deep, evil corruption of nature or the evil, twisted, corrupted nature of humans in its entirety, such that the whole natural person itself, as it is born from its father and mother, is twisted and corrupted in its body and soul through the fall. And free will is turned away from God, with the result that there can be no true fear of God, no love of God, no faith in God by nature.[58]

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[56] "Was wir von Natur ausser der Genade sind/ was Fleisch und alter Adam sey für Gott/ ausser Christo und dem Glauben/ ander warlich nichts/ denn Sünde/ so in den Himel nicht komen kan/ es sey denn/ das es sterbe und untergehe/ und zur Gerechtigkeit widerumb geboren werde und aufferstehe." Count Volrad, *Christliche und dapffere Antwort*, 9.

[57] See chapter two, "Competing Views of Original Sin and Associated Arguments and Meanings," esp. [67 ff.].

[58] "…sey die gar tieffe/ bose verderbung der Natur/ oder die gantz böse verkerete/ verderbte Natur des menschen/ Das der gantze natürliche Mensch selbs/ wie der von Vater und Mutter geborn wird/ an Leib und Seel also verkeret und verderbt ist/ durch den Fall und freywillige abkerung von Gott/ das er aller dinge gar keine

Volrad's definition indicates a close familiarity with the debate. By describing original sin as a "corruption of human nature" or "corrupted human nature," he reveals himself to be a Mansfelder, for, as has been demonstrated, the Eislebeners explicitly accepted only the former of the two definitions. Furthermore, Volrad argued very precisely that the transformation of the human being occurred through the fall into sin, precipitated by a rejection of God, via a decision of free will. After listing the results—no true fear, love, or faith in God by nature—the count condemned the view that original sin was an accident, citing a long list of biblical passages found repeatedly in the Mansfelders' writings to support his assertions.[59] Finally, he rejected the premises and the assumptions behind his opponents' theological position. For example, if God were not completely dissatisfied with human nature, then humankind could claim its own innate righteousness; and, if the nature of humankind was not truly evil, then baptism would become a mere spectacle, not a sacrament that produced an essential transformation.[60]

Analogous to Spangenberg and his clerical colleagues, Volrad argued that his views were those of Luther, that he merely defended the Reformer's position: "Luther spoke loudly and clearly when he described what original sin is, when he said with simple and comprehensible words, which are not unknown to you that [original sin] is our entire corrupted nature and essence. Likewise, sin is everything born of father and mother."[61] Volrad filled his writings with citations from Luther, again mirroring the content and strategy of the Mansfelder pastors.

Like the clergymen, the count explained the implications his position on original sin had on broader Lutheran theology. The realization that the fall completely transformed human nature into original sin, he argued, should not drive the Christian to despair. Rather, it should

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ware Gottesfurcht/ keine ware Gottes liebe/ keinen waren glauben an Gott/ von Natur haben könne." Count Volrad, *Bestendige/ und in Gottes Wort gegründte Bekentnis*, 6.

[59] Count Volrad, *Bestendige/ und in Gottes Wort gegründte Bekentnis*, 13.

[60] Count Volrad, *Bestendige/ und in Gottes Wort gegründte Bekentnis*, 34–35.

[61] "Schlecht und recht hat Lutherus von sich geredt/ da er sagen sollen/ was die Erbsünde sey, das er mit runden verstendlichen Worten gesaget/ so euch nicht unbekandt/ Es sey unser Gantz Verderbte Natur und Wesen. Item Sünde sey alles was von Vater und Mutter geboren wird." Count Volrad, *Bestendiger und Warhafftiger Gegenbericht*, 24.

convince the penitent sinner to place his hope squarely in Christ, not on good works. The count warned,

> So let us take care not to attempt [to gain salvation] according to our birth, rather through the Child who alone is the Son of the virgin and the only Son of God, which no other person in the world can claim. This same person is the only mediator and savior, who will lay aside this controversy, showing mercy to this little church, through the proper understanding of his divine word, so that his honor alone remains and the sinful, corrupted nature receives no [honor] of its own, and is content with the restored grace of the almighty and only God through Christ.[62]

Like the Mansfelder clerics, Volrad's argument safeguarded Luther's central doctrine of justification by grace alone, while rejecting any notion of innate righteousness or goodness.

Finally, the count presented his own version of the anti-intellectualism espoused by the Mansfelder clerics, admonishing his readers not to follow philosophers, but rather pay attention "to the words of truth, which are foolishness to the wisdom of the world and are hidden to the wise and powerful."[63] He ended with the request that his audience overlook his clumsy writing style, while honoring his intentions.

In addition to co-authoring two treatises with Volrad, Count Carl demonstrated elsewhere a clear understanding of the doctrinal content of the debate. When the *Formula of Concord* was published in 1578, he and his two sons sent a letter to the elector of Saxony arguing that the *Formula*'s definition of original sin was false, for in it "original sin is not the nature and essence of humankind, corrupted through Adam's fall, but an accident, a particular and distinct thing in human nature."[64] In the mid-1590s, when he was being urged to sign the *Formula* in

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[62] "So last und hüten/ das wir es nicht suchen in und nach unser Geburt. Sondern in dem Kinde/ Welches alleine der Jungfrawen Sohn/ und eben derselbige einig Gottes Sohn ist/ welches kein Ander Mensch auff erden Rühmen kan. Derselbige unser Einiger Mitler und Erlöser wolte diesem Streit/ diesem Kirchlein zu gnaden/ in Rechtem Verstand seines Göttlichen worts hin und beylegen/ das im seine Ehre alleine bleibe und die Sündliche Verderbte natur ir daran nichts zu eigene/ Sondern an der wiedergebrachten Gnade des Almechtigen einigen Gottes durch Christum erworben/ im Glauben sich benügen lasse." Count Volrad, *Bestendiger und Warhafftiger Gegenbericht*, 25.

[63] "…sondern auf das Wort der Warheit/ so der Welt Weisheit ein Thorheit/ auch den Hohen Weisen und Gewaltiggen verborgen." Count Volrad, *Bestendiger und Warhafftiger Gegenbericht*, 26.

[64] "…die Erbsunde nicht sei, daß Menschen durch Adams fall verderbte Natur und Wesen, sonder sei ein Accidens, ein besonders unterschiedenes dingk in der Menschlichen Natur…." Counts Carl the Elder, Caspar, and Hans Ernst to August,

order to be received back into the church, Carl again rejected its definition of original sin, noting that neither the word *substance* nor *accident* should be used.[65]

While it is true that the counts' writings closely replicate the views of the Mansfelder clerics, this does not diminish the fact that they were deeply engaged with the doctrinal issue at hand. Their writings muster certain arguments, reject others, and demonstrate enough nuance to conclude that they closely followed the debate and had an impressive understanding of its issues. What is more, Volrad's education and desire to be present at the various colloquia further indicate a deep interest in the subject matter. Certainly the counts had political motivations for siding with the Mansfelders, but their focus on the content of the debate demonstrates that it was not just a means to stave off the encroachment of their feudal lords. It was also a fight for doctrinal truth.

But other factors also help to explain their actions, particularly their family history and traditions vis-à-vis the Reformation and its influence on their family identity. Exhibiting a keen appreciation for the centrality of his territory's and family's role in the early Reformation, Volrad dedicated himself to maintaining and extending its legacy, as manifest most clearly in his 1574 pamphlet, *A Constant and True Report*, where he described his family's part in the Reformation at some length.

> And His Grace [Volrad himself] does not doubt that there are many people, not only in the territory of Mansfeld but also in the surrounding lands and cities, who still know and remember the stand taken earlier by the well-born and noble lord, Lord Albrecht, Count and Lord of Mansfeld, the esteemed Count Volrad's lord father of Christian and praiseworthy memory. Through the grace and aid of the Holy Ghost, the almighty God (according to His unspeakable grace and fatherly mercy) revealed once more the Holy Gospel and the Word of God (which alone makes humankind righteous) by his true servant and instrument, Dr. Martin Luther, in these last times of the world. Immediately, [Count Albrecht] along with other electors, counts, and cities not only accepted and publicly acknowledged [the Gospel] without hesitation, along with his brother, Count Gebhard (also of praiseworthy and blessed memory)—

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elector of Saxony, October 20, 1579. Dresden Loc. 10307/6, fol. 156r. This letter can also be found in Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 828, fol. 51v.

[65] "…das aber das streit mit den worten Substantia und Accidens einkommen, wollen s. g. mit diesen Vocabeln richtes anschaffen haben…" Wenigerode MS A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 120r.

> even though as a result, His Grace received more than a little contempt, as at the time Dr. Luther of blessed memory warned His Grace—but to the best of his ability and not without significant costs, [Albrecht] promoted [the Gospel], providing for and supporting churches and schools. Furthermore, [Count Albrecht] remained faithful to [that Gospel] by the grace of God until his death.[66]

In this way Volrad claimed that his father (and uncle) had been central figures in the early Reformation, confidants of Martin Luther, implementers of the Reformation in Mansfeld, sufferers for the sake of the Gospel, and loyal adherents of the Protestant message to their last breaths.[67] Such an ancestry and family history brought with it concomitant responsibilities, argued Volrad.

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[66] "Und stellen S. G. in keinen zweiffel/ Es sey nicht alleine in der Graffschaft Mansfelt/ sondern in allen umliegenden Landen und Stetten/ noch Menniglichen kund/ und wissen/ Welcher gestalt/ Weiland der Wolgeborne und Edle Herr/ Herr Albrecht/ Graff und Herr zu Mansfelt, etc. Wolgedachtes Graffen Volradts Herrn Vater/ Christlicher und Löblicher Gedechtnis/ durch Gnad und Hülff des Heiligen Geists/ die Reine Lere des Heyligen Evangelii/ und allein Seeligmachenden Wort Gottes/ so der Almechtige Gott aus Unaussprecherlicher Gnade/ und Veterlicher Barmhertzigkeit/ durch seinen Getrewen Diener und Werckgezeug D. Martinum Luthern/ in dieser Letzten zeit der Welt/ widerum Gnedigliche offenbaret und an den tag gegeben hat/ Anfenglich beneben andern Chur/ Fürsten/ und Stetten/ nicht allein angenomen/ und beneben irer S. Brudern Graffen Gebharten auch Löblicher und Seeliger Gedechtnis/ offentlich für aller Welt/ Ob wol seinen G. darüber/ nicht ein wenig Rauchs/ wie denn D. Luther Seliger seinen G. zuvor gesagt/ gebissen/ ungeschewet bekandt/ sondern derselbige auch/ nach allem vermügen/ nicht ohne auffwendung merkliches Kostens/ mit ausrichtung/ unterhaltung Kirchen und Schulen/ befordert/ forgesetzt/ dabey auch/ durch Gottes gnad/ bis in den Todt bestendiglich verharret und geblieben ist." Count Volrad, *Bestendiger und Warhafftiger Gegenbericht*, 2–3.

[67] Volrad and Carl made the point on more than one occasion that their father Albrecht was instrumental in promoting the reemergent Gospel and that this was their personal inheritance. Once they remarked that it pained them "…das wir hören und sehen sollen/ wie die Lere/ so von anfang des herwidergebrachten Evangelii/ in denen Kirchen/ darüber wir das *Ius Patronatus* haben/ Christlichen und wol getrieben worden/ welches unserm leiben Herrn Vater/ löblicher und Christlicher gedechtnis/ dem Wolgebornen und Edlen Herrn/ Herrn Albrechten/ weiland Graven und Herrn zu Mansfelt/ etc. nicht ein geringes gestanden/ mit grossen unkosten und gefehrligkeit/ solches nach gelegenheit derselben zeiten/ in schwang zubringen/ nu er solte geendert/ ja offentlichen als Falsch und unrecht verdampt werden/ von deren etliche welchen wir Schutz gehalten/ und von dem unsern ire Besoldung und unterhaltung reichen lassen/ Haben derwegen/ wie das *Depositum* Lutheri/ und in der Kirchen die Lere und ordnung/ so uns von unserm lieben Herrn Vater seligen/ als das beste Erbstücke/ durch Gottes sonderliche Gnade hinderlassen/ und dessen für allen dingen acht zunemen befohlen/ erhalten/ und aller unrichtigkeit begegnet…." Counts Carl and Volrad, *Entliche Erklerung/ sampt gründlicher beweisung*, 6. Volrad and Carl described the history of what they saw as the reemergence of the Gospel, as follows: "…in dieser letzten Zeit/ in D. Luthers Vaterlande/ das selige Liecht der Reinen warheit/ so Gott aus Veterlicher Liebe und Barmhertzigkeit/ durch den Man Gottes angezundet/ und

> And now the well-named Count Volrad, along with his gracious brother [Carl], after the death of his gracious lord father, has inherited the government of His Grace's territory. So His Grace has taken the same stance (without boasting), through God's aid and not without industry and Christian zeal, but according to his earnest duty, promoted the saving work of God and the true Christian religion in his territory and among his subjects (in proper understanding, pure, and unfalsified, as occurred during the lifetime of their lord father, which resulted in His Grace retaining [the Gospel] by divine help). Furthermore so that it might be sown further and spread, he has acknowledged and honored the duties and responsibilities of his office, which he bears according to divine command.[68]

The count considered himself duty-bound to continue the legacy begun by his father of promoting pure Christian religion in his lands, an obligation that had been assigned to him by God.

As the controversy progressed, the Hinterort counts described their association with the Reformation in ever more precise terms, highlighting their family's and territory's unique association not only with Martin Luther, but more specifically with his writings on original sin.

> The blessed man of God, Dr. Luther, did not teach and publish his proper, true opinion regarding original sin (that it is our corrupted nature and essence) only once or just near the end of his writings, but he handled it forcefully and wonderfully already fifty years ago (as the aforementioned evidence suggests) in his Church postils. [This book] he dedicated to our dear lord father, at that time Count Albrecht of Mansfeld of God-blessed memory, and therefore to us as [Albrecht's] heirs and indeed to the entire territory, and especially to all the pastors found therein. And this was [Luther's] favorite and best book, as

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durch weiland unsern Herrn und Vatern/ Graffen Albrechten zu Mansfeld/ Löblicher gedechtnis/ In dieser Graffschaft/ dafur ime billich zu dancken/ ausgebreitet und erhalten/ widerumb welchs der leibe Gott vorhüten wolte…." Counts Volrad and Carl, from an open mandate dated January 5, 1574. Dresden, Loc. 9756/13, fol. 87v.

[68] "Nach dem nu Wolgenanter Graff Volradt/ nach Tödtlichem abgang/ Weiland seiner G. Herrn Vaters/ beneben seiner G. Brüdern/ in die Regierung I. G. Herrschafft getretten/ So haben gleicher gestalt I. G. (ohne Rhum zumelden) durch verleihung Göttlicher Hülff/ an irem Fleis und Christlichen Eiver auch nichtes erwinden/ sondern für allen dingen/ inen mit ernst obgelegen sein lassen/ wie das Seeligmachende Wort Gottes/ und Ware Christliche Religion/ in irer G. Herrschafft/ und bey derselbigen Unterthanen/ in rechtem Verstand/ rein und unverfelschet/ in massen bey Leben Weiland ires Herrn Vaters/ beschehen/ und folgends auff ire G. komen durch verliehung Göttlicher Hülff erhalten/ auch ferner gepflantzet und ausgebreitet werden möchte/ darzu den irer G. Göttlichem befehlich nach/ austragendem Ampt sich schüldig und pflichtig achten/ und erkennen." Count Volrad, *Bestendiger und Warhafftiger Gegenbericht*, 2–3.

> he himself indicated…when he called it something entrusted to or an endorsement for this territory in the dedication. Therefore, we intend to remain devoted to this good endorsement with steadfast confession, faithfully with God's blessed help and support and the governance of the Holy Ghost, along with the properly called, steadfast teachers. And [we intend to] remain faithful to it until we are in our grave. And [we will] reject all contradictory error, all untimely and wanton condemnations. [And this] especially because the above-mentioned Dr. Luther promoted such teaching regarding original sin up to the end of his life, as can be seen in the sermons—among them one of his last, which he preached in Eisleben, in which [he described] the Old Adam and corrupted nature and original sin as one thing.[69]

At two points in the reformer's life his doctrine of original sin and Mansfeld had intersected, once when Luther dedicated his church postil to Volrad's father Albrecht in 1523, and a second time in one of the final sermons preached by the Reformer days prior to his death in Eisleben.[70] Luther's articulation of this doctrine, specifically in and for Mansfeld, argued Volrad, further obliged the count to protect it.

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[69] "…hat der selige Mann Gottes D. Luther/ nicht einmal/ oder nur am ende seiner Schrifften/ diese rechte/ warhafftige meinung von der Erbsünde/ das sie sey unsere verderbte Natur und Wesen/ geleret und geschrieben/ sondern lenger denn für 50 Jaren/ solches (wie aus obgesatzten zugnissen zuspuren) gewaltig und herrlich gehandelt/ in seinen Kirchenpostilla/ die er unserm geliebten Herrn Vater/ weiland Graff Albrechten zu Mansfeld/ Gottseliger gedechtnis zugeschrieben/ Und also auch Uns/ als den Erben/ ja der gantzen Graffschafft/ und in sonderheit allen Predigern darinnen/ solches sein liebstes und bestes Buch/ wie ers selbst…nennet/ gleich als ein gutes Depositum oder beylag/ dieser Graffschafft/ durch gedachte zuschreibung ubergeben/ Darumb wir auch billich/ uber solchem gutem beylag/ mit bestendiger Bekentnis/ trewlich/ durch Gottes gnedige verleihung und beystand/ und regirung de Heiligen Geistes/ neben den rechtschaffenen/ bestendigen Lerern/ gedencken zuhalten/ und dabey bis in die Grube zu verharren/ und alle widerwertige verkerung/ unzeitige und mutwillige verdammung/ nicht zu billigen/ sonderlich dieweil viel gemelter/ Doc. Luther/ solche lere von der Erbsünde mit grösser bestendigkeit/ bis ans ende seines Lebens/ getrieben/ wie zusehen in der Predigte/ so one eine die letzte gewesen/ die er zu Eisleben gethan hat/ darinnen ime noch Alter Adam/ verderbte Natur und Erbsünde/ ein ding gewesen." Counts Volrad and Carl, *Bestendige/ und in Gottes wort gegründte Bekentnis*, 24–25. For Luther's dedication, see *WA* 10/1/1:1–8; I have been unable to discover the reference to Luther's "endorsement for this territory"; for Luther's sermon reference to the Old Adam and original sin, see *WA* 51:179.

[70] Volrad also argued that tradionally the theologians of Mansfeld had retained and perpetuated the teachings of Luther on original sin. Because Luther never called original sin an accident, he argued, "…so ist auch kein zweiffel/ weil sich D. Guttel/ herr Michael/ die beyde alten Herrn/ Spangenberg und Sarcerius/ der Doctor Luthers Kirchenpostillen/ und anderer seiner Bücher gebraucht/ das sie gewislich auch seiner Lere darinne gefolget/ und seine eigene Wort behalten haben." Count Volrad, *Christliche und dapffere Antwort*, 11.

After Volrad's death in 1578, his brother Carl continued the appeal to his family's religious tradition in his defense of the Mansfelders, adding to it the memory of his deceased sibling. Pressed by the elector of Saxony in 1579 to sign *The Formula of Concord*'s article on original sin, Carl and his nephews (Volrad's sons) contended that to do so "…would be to damn ourselves, our brother and father who has fallen asleep in God, and our Christian confession. It would make us participants not only in his persecution, but also in the damned Manichaean and Pelagian errors."[71] The Mittelort count, Christoff, also under pressure from the elector to sign the *Formula*, likewise resisted by appealing to his family's tradition of adherence to the Augsburg Confession as the only statement of faith necessary:

> In addition, we are very cheered and thank and praise God that the faithful, dear God gave grace to our wellborn dear lord and father [Count Gebhard] of Christian memory, so that his grace confessed the aforementioned Augsburg Confession of 1530 before the highest emperor without fear, freely, and steadfastly. And that he remained faithful to it till his end, taught and raised us in [its precepts], in which we hope that divine omnipotence keeps us to our end in the same way.[72]

The Mittelort family identity was also linked closely to a heroic ancestor's early decision to side with the Reformation, a stand Christoff felt obligated to honor and carry forward. In the controversy over original sin this meant remaining faithful to Luther's views, which the Hinterort and Mittelort counts associated with the Mansfelders. Thus a collective family identity must be seen as a motivating force in their actions.

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[71] "…so wurden wir uns selbs, unserm in Got entschlafene Bruder und Gevatter, auch unsere Christlich Bekentnis, damit verdammen, nicht allein allen verfolgeung des gegenteils, sondern auch deren, von Ihren eingefuhrtt Manicheischen und Pelagiaschen Irthumen und Theilhafftig machen. Counts Carl the Elder, Casper, and Hans Ernst to Electoral Saxony's *Oberaufseher*, Hans von Lindenau, October 20, 1579. Dresden, Loc. 10307/6, fol. 155v. This letter can also be found in Wenigerode A 12a III, No. 828, fol. 51v.

[72] "Nachfolgendts haben wir uns Gott lob und danck, billich zuerfrewen, das auch der getrewe Liebe Gott, den wolgebornen unsern geliebten Herrn und Vatern, Christlichen seligen wolloblicher gedechtnus, die gnade vorliehenn, das S. L. der ao. 30 erwenter Christlichen bekentnus der Augspurgischen Confession, ungeschewet aller gefahr, frey und bestandlich, vor hochstermelte Kayser bekandt, und darbey, bis an sein ende, vorharret, uns dorinnen under weisen und auff ziehen lassen, darbey sein Gottlicher Allmacht, uns ans ende gleicher weis wolle erhalten." Count Christoff to Elector August of Saxony, October 9, 1579. Dresden, Loc. 10307/6, fol. 110v.

Counts from the Hinterort and Mittelort complemented references to family tradition with appeals to contemporary notions of the obligations of a Christian ruler, which included promulgating orthodox doctrine in his lands. In the introduction to a pamphlet explaining their beliefs on original sin, Volrad and Carl summarized their duties as Christian princes:

> And what has been commanded by God in common to all Christians is also most certainly applicable to the Christian authority: namely to examine in an orderly fashion that which the church acknowledges as right from God's Word. For indeed the primary duty and greatest concern of the authorities should be to carefully sift [these teachings] and, according to the precepts from God's Word, to promote [them] in every possible way, so that their lands and territories, together with their subjects, be well and truly provided with accurate, pure doctrine and not misled by false teachers into dreadful error.[73]

Remarkable about this position is the degree to which the notion of the Christian ruler involved the hands on "sifting" of theological premises. It is also noteworthy, however, that as counts, they considered their stature sufficient to perform this duty, rejecting the notion that it be left to more powerful princes or kings. Such claims not only bolstered their position in the theological debate, but in light of the political situation in the territory, also reaffirmed their ultimate authority there. By painting themselves in the role of protectors and arbiters of true

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[73] "Und was nu also in Gemein allen Christen von Gott befohlen/ wird freilich auch der Christlichen Oberkeit/ das jenige was die Kirche aus Gottes Wort für recht erkennet/ ordentlicher weise zu exequiren, gesagt sein: Denn ja der Oberkeit fürnembstes Ampt und groste sorge sein sol/ mit fleis darauff achtung zugeben/ und nach ausweisung Göttliches Worts/ mügliche beföderung zuthun/ das in iren Landen und Herrschafften/ sie sampt iren unterthanen/ mit rechter/ reiner Lere/ trewlich und wol vorsehen/ und nicht durch Falsche Lerer/ in Irthumb jemmerlich verfüret werden." Counts Volrad and Carl, *Entliche Erklerung/ sampt gründlicher beweisung*, 8. Two pages later, the counts explained in even more detail what they considered this injunction to entail: "Nu wir denn auch Gliedmassen der lieben Kirchen Christi sind/ und als Christliche Oberkeit befehl haben/ für unsere unterthanen zusorgen/ das dieselbigen mit rechter reiner Lere versehen/ und nicht mit Falscher Lere beschmitzet werden möchten/ Als befinden wir uns auch in diesem fürstehenden Fall schüldig/ nach Gottes Wort und der Christlichen Kirchen/ fürnemlich Christi selbst/ seiner Propheten/ Aposteln/ und aller Christlichen Lerer/ sonderlichen des Mannes Gottes Lutheri/ und anderer (so neben/ mit und nach Luthero/ gemes geleret) Rath und Erkentnis/ also zuverfaren/ das (so viel an uns) Gottes Ehre/ und die warheit befördert/ Christliche Lere erhalten/ Falsche abgeschaffet/ und verfürung der armen unterthanen verkomen werde." Counts Volrad and Carl, *Entliche Erklerung/ sampt gründlicher beweisung*, 10.

doctrine, they highlighted their own autonomy, reminding their feudal lords and subjects that they were the highest powers in the land.

Even more extraordinary was the genealogy of rulers in whose line the counts placed themselves. The Old Testament kings David, Josias, and Jehosaphat, the Roman emperors, Constantine and Theodosius, and in more recent times, the (Ernestine) electors of Saxony, Fredrick [the Wise], John [the Constant], and John Fredrick had all been defenders, promoters, and examiners of God's word. But this lineage included their own family. Praising the actions of the Saxon Electors during the early Reformation, the counts claimed that "…our dear lord father [Count Albrecht], of blessed and praiseworthy memory followed their example by expelling Doctor Maior and Stephan Agricola."[74] The implication here was that Volrad and Carl represented the newest members of the line of godly rulers dating back to David, all of whom held the responsibility to protect and ensure true doctrine. Thus their actions during the controversy over original sin must be seen as motivated at least in part by an understanding of their duties as Christian rulers.

Finally, the Hinterort counts claimed that it was their right and responsibility as free Christians to join the debate, undoubtedly responding to the Mansfelder clerics' urgings. Sometimes they connected this obligation to their duties as Christian princes, as when they insisted "…what God has commanded in common to all Christians is also most certainly applicable to the Christian authority.…"[75] Elsewhere their status as faithful Christians alone provided justification for their involvement in the controversy, as when they claimed, "Now God asks all people and commands all true Christians to avoid idolatry and false teaching, not to listen to false prophets and lying pastors, but to eschew their vanity and extirpate them."[76] But the role of the

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[74] "Welchem Exempel auch unser lieber Herr Vater/ seliger und Löblicher gedechtnis/ in Doctor Maiors…[und] in Stephan Grickels ausweisung gefolget." Counts Volrad and Carl, *Entliche Erklerung/ sampt gründlicher beweisung*, 10. Maior and Agricola were theologians whom Albrecht had relieved of their posts for teaching false doctrine.

[75] "Und was nu also in Gemein allen Christen von Gott befohlen/ wird freilich auch der Christlichen Oberkeit.…" Counts Volrad and Carl, *Entliche Erklerung/ sampt gründlicher beweisung*, 8.

[76] "Nu gebeut Gott in gemeine/ und befehlet allen rechtschaffenen Christen/ Abgötterey und unrechte Lere zumeiden/ Falsche Propheten und Lügenprediger nicht zuhören/ sondern ir müssig zugehen/ und sie abzuschaffen." Counts Volrad and Carl, *Entliche Erklerung/ sampt gründlicher beweisung*," 8.

Christian went beyond evading suspect or heretical teaching: Christian freedom authorized them to publicly announce the truth. In response to Fabricius, an Eislebener pastor who inquired of Volrad why he took such an active role in the controversy, the count answered that it was his duty to protect the church's purity of doctrine. "Furthermore," he continued, "it would be a strange affair if no one except those individuals who are servants of the church had the Christian freedom to give witness to the truth orally or with the pen."[77]

Nor did Volrad believe that his "simplicity" as a layman prohibited him from engaging the theologians. When Johan Wigand cautioned the count to beware of Spangenberg's Manichaeism, Volrad noted that "…although we must admit that we are no doctor, but a simple layman, nonetheless we could indeed respond at length and give a good answer to your nonsensical position, if we were of the mind to allow ourselves to get into a disputation with you."[78] Lack of theological training was no barrier to refuting Wigand's view, not because the count considered himself a particularly gifted theologian, but because of Wigand's weak argument. The Hinterort counts did, indeed, engage in doctrinal debates, despite what they referred to as their simplicity. Sometimes they used their lack of formal theological training to their advantage, insisting that even without it they could disprove their opponents' arguments. Volrad employed this tactic to question the Jena professors' use of glosses, admitting that "according to my slight understanding and simplicity, Christians should not use many glosses. And who uses more glosses in these dangerous last times than the tumultuous spirits in Jena?"[79]

When considering the reasons why the Hinterort counts became so deeply involved in the controversy over original sin their many references to their own identity must be a significant piece of the puzzle. What is more, aspects of that identity coincide with features of the

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[77] "Uber das, So wolte es auch ein seltzamer Handel werden/ wenn Neimandts denn alleine die/ so im Kirchendienst sind/ solten die Christliche Freyheit haben/ der Warheit mit Mund und Feder zeugnis zugeben." Count Volrad, *Bestendiger und Warhafftiger Gegenbericht*, 21.

[78] "…ob wir wol uns/ das wir kein Doctor/ sondern ein einfeltiger Leye sein/ erkennen/ könten wir euch doch nach der lenge auff ewer ungereimptes folgern gute Antwort geben/ wenn wir uns mit euch in eine Disputation einzulassen/ bedacht weren." Count Volrad, *Christliche und dapffere Antwort*, 10.

[79] "Meinem geringen Verstand und einfalt nach/ solten Christen nicht viel glossiren. Wer glossiert aber zu dieser Gefehrlichen Letzen zeit mehr/ denn die Unruhigen Jenischen Geister?" Count Volrad, *Bestendiger und Warhafftiger Gegenbericht*, 23.

Mansfelder clergy's broader view of the laity, suggesting this as one point of connection between the two groups. The Hinterort counts saw themselves as simple, devout Christians responding to the injunction (and its tradition among followers of Luther) that each Christian had the right and responsibility to judge questions of theology. But their identity as simple Christians was intimately bound with their understanding of their duties as Christian rulers, itself framed in large part by loyalty to a family tradition linking them to the early Reformation and its central figure in Germany, Martin Luther. They combined these elements to create a perception of themselves that served two goals relating to the controversy. It crowned their views with an aura of authority and their actions in the political arena with the claim of autonomy. By taking the Mansfelder's side, the counts demonstrated that they would not bow to the elector's and administrator's attempts to impose doctrines on the territory.

But family and personal identity, along with political considerations, do not fully explain their actions during the debate. Well before the controversy in Mansfeld became a political issue, the Hinterort counts (Volrad in particular) were already involved, as Volrad accompanied his churchmen to Weimar in 1571, and personally approved Mencel's confession produced there. Moreover, their actions during the controversy, their composition of pamphlets, and their direct involvement in the colloquia belie an interest that goes beyond political expediency and the dictates of family tradition. Clearly they believed in their doctrinal position and were willing to risk their political autonomy for it. This assertion can best be demonstrated by the counts' actions after Spangenberg's expulsion and the administrator's invasion of Tal Mansfeld, a political defeat that in no way diminished their efforts to promote their theological position and protect those who believed likewise. To this end Volrad died in exile in Strasbourg. To this end his brother Carl remained outside the territory's official church for two decades.

The Vorderort Counts' Defense of the Eislebeners

Among those counts who supported the Eislebeners and opposed the Mansfelders, the Vorderort count, Hans Georg I (1515–1579), stands out as the most influential, perhaps because at the time he was governor (*Statthalter*) for Elector August of Saxony. Other members of

the Vorderort dynasty who sided with the Eislebeners included Hans George's brothers, Hans Albrecht (d. 1586) and Hans Hoyer (d. 1585), and their nephew Bruno II (d. 1615). As noted above, however, not all Vorderort counts adhered to the position taken by the dynastic line, for until his death in 1572, a fourth brother, Hans Ernst, had defended the Mansfelders.[80] But the Vorderort counts also found an ally among their Hinterort cousins. The widow of the deceased Hinterort count, Hans I (d. 1567, brother to Volrad and Carl), joined them in condemning the Mansfelders.

The Vorderort counts'[81] involvement in the controversy took a very different form from that of their cousins. In keeping with their pastors' definition of the role of the laity in the church, they did not engage directly in the doctrinal discussions. They wrote no pamphlets and took part in no debates. In fact, they declined to attend any of the colloquia even after receiving a direct invitation from the pastors.[82] Few first-hand explanations of their actions during the controversy have survived, making the task of discerning why they supported the Eislebeners and opposed the Mansfelders more difficult. However, close analysis of the existing sources reveals that their political circumstances, family tradition and history, personal relationship with Spangenberg, and doctrinal leanings all converged to account for their actions.

Political considerations proved central. In light of the tremendous pressure placed on them as a result of the *Sequestration*, the counts had little choice but to follow the lead of the elector of Saxony and administrator of the archdiocese of Magdeburg, and that lead was clear. Already in 1570 in his instructions to his new *Sequestration* representative in the territory, the elector had ordered a visitation of Mansfeld's churches to ensure that no pastors were disseminating Flacian teachings.[83] And since any hopes of regaining their former authority rested

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[80] Spangenberg, *Historia*, 76.

[81] For the sake of simplicity, references to "the Vorderort Counts" in this section will include Hans George, Hans Albrecht, Hans Hoyer, and Bruno, along with the *Hinterort* countess, Margaretha. They will not include Hans Ernst (the Vorderort supporter of Spangenberg), nor the fifth brother, Peter Ernst, who had little involvement in the controversy.

[82] Spangenberg, *Historia*, 75.

[83] Gottfried August Arndt, ed. "Mansfeldische Urkunden, zu Ergänzung der Geschichte der *Sequestration* des Mansfeldischen, in ihrem ersten Jahrzehenden," *Archiv für Sächsischen Geschichte* 1 (1748): 267–339, here "Instruction des Oberauffsehers der

on a combination of an economic upswing and the elector's good will, the counts had little choice but to proceed against the Mansfelders. Hans Georg, in his position as the elector's governor, had even less room to maneuver.

But however tightly the *Sequestration* and the Eislebener position in the controversy over original sin were linked in the minds of the Vorderort counts, the two were not inseparable. Count Peter Ernst fought the *Sequestration* for decades but never supported the Eislebeners nor condemned the Mansfelders. Hans Ernst, contrariwise, resisted the *Sequestration* until his death in 1572, but was a staunch opponent of the Eislebeners. The point is that political and religious considerations were not contiguous for all the Vorderort counts, so that it would be wrong to assume that political expediency fully explains their actions in the controversy.

Their dynasty's religious and political traditions also appear to have been a significant factor in this regard. Until his death in 1540, Hoyer VI, patriarch of Vorderort line, had maintained his family's loyalty to pope, emperor, and princes of Albertine Saxony. Shortly thereafter his nephews converted to Protestantism, but the family took no part in the Reformation's early and formative years. Many of them had spent the first half of their lives as Catholics and thereafter had little personal contact with Luther. Unlike their cousins, Christoff and Volrad, none of the Vorderort counts attended the University of Wittenberg or heard Luther's lectures there. As a result, they never appealed to a familial tradition of support for the Reformation as confirmation of the propriety of their position in the controversy. The Mansfelder clerics' efforts to associate their views with Luther's, as well as their appeals to the Reformer's works (along with the Word of God) as arbiter in the controversy, probably did not resonate in any immediate and personal way with the Vorderort counts. Furthermore, even after their conversion to Protestantism, a decision that itself came directly on the heels of Albertine Saxony's acceptance of the Reformation, the Vorderort counts continued a family tradition of allying themselves with the Albertine Saxons,[84] even when this meant going against their new religious allies by fighting for the emperor in the Schmalkald War.

Grafschaft Mansfeldt, Verwaltung undt Regirung derselben anlangend. Dreßden den 29 September, 1570," 271–81.

[84] See chapter one, "A Portrait of Mansfeld in the Sixteenth Century," esp. [31–34].

Given the family's legacy of service in this regard, its antithetical relationship to the early Reformation, and its situation as a result of the *Sequestration*, it is not surprising that most of the Vorderort counts joined the elector in condemning the Mansfelders.

Other factors, however, suggest that their actions during the controversy were not wholly a result of political interests and family traditions. The zeal with which they maneuvered against the Mansfelders and urged their feudal lords (and in the case of the elector of Brandenburg, the father of a feudal lord) to do likewise indicates an interest beyond political expediency, as does their active engagement with the controversy. Following the Eisleben Colloquium of 1572, they endeavored to help the pastors reach consensus by procuring *Gutachten* from the Protestant theologians in surrounding territories, expecting that nonpartisan viewpoints would end the dispute.[85] As late as January of 1572, Hans Georg and Hans Albrecht summoned the clerical leaders from both sides and admonished them to remain faithful to the confession that they had produced in 1565.[86] But by 1574, these counts had changed their policy to one of active hostility toward the Mansfelders. In spring of that year, Hans Georg refused the citizens of Tal Mansfeld their traditional right to graze flocks in his meadows because of that city's support for the Mansfelders.[87] And when the counts' attempts to oust Spangenberg failed, they ceased to pay him the three-fifths of his salary for which they were responsible.[88]

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[85] Count Hans Albrecht explained his strategy in a letter to his brother Hans Ernst: "Unser einfeltiges bedencken warr aber dieses, das man die artickel und punckten, so uff itzigenn der Theologen Colloquio zu Eisleben proponirt worden, beneben dem Jenigen, so uff itzigenn der darauff resolvirt und einmutiglich verglichen an andere zuverdechtige und Rechtschaffene reine Schulen und Kirchen in der Nachbarschaft uberschickt, Ihre Iuditia und bedencken derauff gebeten, und als dan mit Raht derselben gebuhrliche und Christliche vergleichunge unter Ihnen vergenhommen hatte." Count Hans Albrecht to Count Hans Ernst, July 15, 1572. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III 830, fol. 44v–45r.

[86] Spangenberg, *Historia*, 40.

[87] Spangenberg, *Mansfeldische Chronica,* in *Mansfelder Blätter* 30 (1916): 85.

[88] Evidence for their actions comes from a letter dated February 5, 1573, from Counts Hans George, Hans Albrecht, Hans Hoyer, and Bruno to the city council of Hettstedt, responsible for that actual payment of Spangenberg's wages. The counts command, "Magister Spangenberg, soviel unser drey fünffteil belanget, an seiner geordenten besoldunge bis uff fernern bevehl nichts zu reichen." I have not been able to find this letter in the archive, but have quoted it from Rembe, ed., *Der Briefwechsel des M. Cyricaus Spangenberg*, 2:29, n. 1.

But the most overt and recurrent means of harassing the Mansfelders was through the exercise of comital rights of ecclesiastical patronage, that is expelling Mansfelder pastors from churches where these counts held *ius patronatus*, or resisting efforts by their cousins to do the same to Eislebener pastors. The Hinterort counts were the first to remove a pastor, expelling the Eislebener, Anthonius Crüciger, assistant pastor in Tal Mansfeld, from his post. This act precipitated an immediate condemnation from Count Hans Albrecht.[89] But the most notable clash over *ius patronatus* began two years later when the Hinterort counts, Volrad and Carl, expelled Eislebener pastors from two churches in Eisleben. Although the Hinterort line held patronage rights over the churches, the brothers failed to consult their sister-in-law, Margaretha, widow of their brother Hans and regent for her two minor sons. In spite of her family's support for the Mansfelders, she immediately denounced the actions of her brothers-in-law, arguing that one-third of the *ius patronatus* for these churches belonged to her. In an open letter she commanded the two congregations to recall their former pastors and to repudiate those clerics lately installed in their places. These new pastors, she insisted, preached such extreme Manichaean heresy "that even a blind person could grasp and understand this fact."[90] She summoned the sexton from one of the churches, demanded the key, and locked the church for the next three months to ensure that the newly installed "heretical" pastors not preach there.[91]

Furthermore, Countess Margaretha took active steps to expel Mansfelder pastors from churches over which she held partial or full rights of patronage. In April of 1574, she demanded that Wilhelm Sarcerius, pastor at St. Peter's and Paul's church in Eisleben, and his chaplain, vacate their posts within one week.[92] On the same day, the Vorderort counts commanded Spangenberg and his chaplain, Cosemus Bohem, to leave their houses, arguing that, as rulers of three-fifths

[89] Count Hans Albrecht to the Tal Mansfeld city council, September 24, 1572. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III 830, fol. 52v.

[90] "…das auch ein Blinder solches greiffen und verstehen könne." Countess Margaretha to the congregations of St. Nicolai's and S. Peter and Paul's, Eisleben, January 2, 1574. Dresden, Loc. 9756/13, fol. 88v.

[91] Countess Margaretha to the congregations of St. Nicolai's and S. Peter and Paul's, Eisleben, January 2, 1574. Dresden, Loc. 9756/13, fol. 89r.

[92] Countess Margaretha to Wilhelm Sarcerius, April 24, 1574. Dresden, Loc. 9756/13, fol. 145v–147v.

of the territory, they had a majority control over these properties.[93] Although both attempts failed, the Vorderort counts (and Countess Margaretha) endeavored to exercise those powers remaining to them after the *Sequestration* to support the Eislebeners and oppose the Mansfelders.

The Vorderort counts also played an integral role in preparing for the invasion of Tal Mansfeld, further demonstrating their keen opposition to the Mansfelders. On Christmas Eve 1574, Hans Georg and Hans Hoyer arrived at the fortress in Tal Mansfeld with twelve horsemen, adding another fifteen the next day. During the following week, some of the administrator's soldiers arrived, a mustering of arms that tipped off the Hinterort counts' advisors (the counts themselves were absent from Tal Mansfeld at the time) that the administrator and Vorderort counts were preparing to use force.[94] On December 28, the Vorderort count, Bruno, arrived at the fortress with another ten horses and eight wagons full of weapons, dissimulating that the military build-up was merely part of the administrator's efforts to secure the goods he had gained in the *Sequestration*. When the Mittelort count, Christoff, appeared during the week between Christmas and New Year's, soldiers of the Vorderort counts refused him entrance into his own quarters in the fortress.[95] During the takeover of the castle on New Year's Eve, Hans Georg and Hans Hoyer occupied the Hinterort portion of the fortress.[96] These actions in the preparation and execution of the invasion do not suggest grudging support, but enthusiastic participation.

And after the military action, the Vorderort counts repeatedly requested that the sequestering princes address the ongoing problem posed by the Mansfelder laity. Six months after the events of New Year's Eve 1574, they informed Saxony's representative in the territory that lay adherents of the Mansfelders still maintained their heretical beliefs through conventicles, secret schools, and outlawed books, naming those individuals most deeply involved and urging the elector's

[93] Counts Hans George, Hans Albrecht, Hans Hoyer, and Bruno to Cyriakus Spangenberg and Cosmus Bohem, April 24, 1574. Dresden, Loc. 9756/13, fol. 148v–149v.

[94] Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 54r.

[95] Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 56r.

[96] Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 58v.

representative to "entirely root out the Manichaean heretics."[97] Moreover, they attempted to ensure that the Eislebener clerics who had replaced the expelled Mansfelders were accepted by the laity. In an angry letter to the Tal Mansfeld city council, the counts chastised the councilors for neglecting to pay the new Eislebener pastors their salaries, for failing to expel the Mansfelder elders in the city church, and for withholding the church key from the sexton. "If things should continue as they have and no changes are made," they threatened, "we will seek you out and you will learn whether this [request] is a mere jest or is for real."[98] And they took steps to enforce new laws against lay adherents of the Mansfelders, one of which mandated that no Mansfelder be buried in the church cemetery. In 1577, when the Eisleben city council allowed some particularly prominent citizens who also happened to be Mansfelders burial in the cemetery, they received a scathing rebuke from the counts.[99]

Finally, between 1575 and 1580, the Vorderort counts repeatedly informed the elector and the administrator about the status of the "heresy" and their efforts to stamp it out, often requesting aid in this endeavor. In spring of 1578, Hans Georg reported to the administrator regarding a group of Mansfelders who had been cited frequently before the consistory. He described their obstinacy, enumerated the actions of specific individuals to demonstrate the point, and complained to the administrator that his representative in the Mansfeld took no action to improve the situation. Failure to address the problem would be a mistake, "…and from this business would arise a Muntzerish and Anabaptist situation," he added.[100] Less than a year

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[97] "die Manicheische Ketzer gantzlichen aussgerottet." Counts Hans George, Hans Hoyer, and Bruno to Benno Pflug, Saxon representative in Mansfeld, June 21, 1575. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 828, fol. 37v.

[98] "Solte es bey euch gleich wie zuvorn mehrmals gescheen, abermals keine stadt finden, wollen wir euch als daheimb suchen, das Ihr spuren sollet ob es schimpf oder ernst sei." Count Hans Georg to the Tal Mansfeld city council, April 30, 1576. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 831.

[99] "So begerenn wir hiemit ernstlich, mit bevelich, Das Ihr hinfuro solche ketzer, so sich In Irem glaubenn von Unß sondern, keines weges auf den Gottes acker begraben lasset." Counts Hans George, Hans Albrecht, Hans Hoyer, and Bruno to the Eisleben city council, January 15, 1577. This letter can be found in the *Andreaskirche Turmarchiv* in Eisleben. As there is absolutely no order to this archive, I cannot provide a closer description of its location.

[100] "…und wirdt aus dieser handlung ein Muntzerisch und wiederteufferische Sach erfolgen." Count Hans Georg to the administrator of the archdiocese of Magdeburg's council, April 4, 1578. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 828, fol. 76v.

later, the Vorderort counts again urged the princes to decisive action "…so that such problems be taken care of and a new fire and uproar not be given the opportunity to erupt—one that would be worse than the original."[101] This message finally roused the administrator who responded by sending his commissioner to conduct a visitation of all laity in Tal Mansfeld.[102]

One reason for the alacrity and vigor with which the Vorderort counts moved against the Mansfelders rests on the breakdown of their relationship with Cyriakus Spangenberg. Until the mid 1560's, they had had an amicable if not particularly close relationship with Spangenberg. As late as 1567 Spangenberg rejected an offer to become the superintendent of Lübeck, citing the fact that the counts of Mansfeld were intent upon retaining his services.[103] A year later Spangenberg would remind Count Hans Georg that he had asked the cleric to stay, and the dean promised to disregard the slanderous rumors circulating about the count's evil intentions toward him.[104] But by the end of 1568, the relationship had changed, causing the dean to admit that, "In the past two months it has become clear to me that I have fallen into the deepest and most dire displeasure of Your Grace and your brothers."[105] Whether because he had begun to find his way back into their good graces or in an attempt to do so, Spangenberg dedicated the appendix to his *Cithara Lutheri* to Hans Albrecht, brother of Hans Georg in 1570.[106]

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[101] "…damit solchen Ergerniß gesteuert, Unndt einem Neuenn Feuer und unglucke, da das letzte Erger als das Erste werden mochte, nicht stadt nach Raumm gegeben worde." Counts Hans George, Hans Albrecht, Hans Hoyer, and Bruno to the Magdeburg administrator's council, March 31, 1579. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 828, fol. 58v.

[102] Magdeburg administrator to Counts Hans George, Hans Albrecht, Hans Hoyer and Bruno, May 7, 1579. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 831, fol. 15v.

[103] Cyriakus Spangenberg to the city council of Lübeck, February 27, 1567. Rembe, ed. *Der Briefwechsel des M. Cyricaus Spangenberg*, 1: 81.

[104] Cyriakus Spangenberg to Count Hans Georg, February 12, 1568. Rembe, ed., *Der Briefwechsel des M. Cyricaus Spangenberg*, 1: 109.

[105] "Ich habe nhumehr bey zweyen Monden wol vermerckt, wie ich bey E. g. und derselben brüdern in die hoheste und gar beschwerliche ungnade kommen." Cyriakus Spangenberg to Count Hans Georg, February 12, 1568. Rembe, ed., *Der Briefwechsel des M. Cyricaus Spangenberg*, 1: 109.

[106] Spangenberg, *Cithara Lutheri*, Introduction. This publication from 1570 represents Spangenberg's first German-language explanation of his views on the doctrine of original sin.

Hermann Etzrodt has argued convincingly that the decisive break between Spangenberg and the Vorderort counts came in 1573 when the dean denied countess Dorothea the honor of serving as a godparent.[107] The aged mother of thirteen children, five of whom were Vorderort counts (the final Vorderort count was her grandson), Dorothea lived at the castle in Tal Mansfeld and had regular contact with Spangenberg and his clerical colleagues there. In 1571, her sons tried to convince her to relocate to Eisleben to avoid the preaching of the Mansfelders. Although she refused, in the autumn of 1572 she stopped receiving the Eucharist from Spangenberg and the Mansfelder pastors, always finding some excuse to be in Eisleben on days on which the Lord's Supper was celebrated.[108] In July of 1573, a certain Cilax Hesse asked the countess and two others to be godparents to his newborn child. Because Dorothea had been avoiding communion in Tal Mansfeld, Spangenberg denied her and one other proposed godparent that honor, explaining that "…when a pastor blesses the child and ejects the evil spirit in the presence of the godparents, [the spirit] will enter into someone near to the baptism who has a bad conscience."[109] In essence, Spangenberg argued that the exorcised evil spirit would possess the countess, who, due to her refusal to receive the Eucharist from him, suffered from a disturbed conscience. The event angered the countess and even more so, her sons Hans Georg and his brothers. The breach was exacerbated by the fact that the other person to whom Spangenberg denied godparentship was Bastian Breyther, one of Hans Georg's most influential advisors. Like the countess, Breyther had refused to take communion in Tal Mansfeld. Initially Spangenberg did not realize the depth of the rift he had caused. In mid-October he wrote to Dorothea imploring her to convince her sons to organize an open forum where he could explain his views on original sin. The countess passed the letter to Hans Georg who, along with his brothers, condemned Spangenberg's teachings and refused all communica-

[107] Hermann Etzrodt, "Spangenberg und die Altgräfin Dorothea von Mansfeld," *Mansfelder Heimatblättern (Beilage zum Eisleber Tageblatt)* (1934): 20–27.

[108] Etzrodt, "Spangenberg und die Altgräfin Dorothea," 22.

[109] "Das wan der Seelsorger das Kindt gesegnet und dem Bösen Geist neben den Baten abgesagt habe, daß derselbige in den einen, so bei der Taufe gestanden und ein Boß gewissen gehabt, gefahren were." Etzrodt quotes, but does not cite this source: Etzrodt, "Spangenberg und die Altgräfin Dorothea," 23.

tion with him.[110] In the meantime, Breyther began a smear campaign against the dean.

Spangenberg, it seems, had already used denial of the comforts of the church against other Eislebener laity. During the incident with Countess Dorothea, Superintendent Mencel reminded Hans Georg, "for Your Grace knows the kind of monkey-business going on in the Castle-church in Mansfeld, where they forced the young Miss von Wildenfels and the maiden Clara to do open penance because they had received the Eucharist from us here in Eisleben along with Your Grace's mother."[111] Apparently such events intensified Hans Georg's animosity toward Spangenberg, as shortly thereafter the count commanded his advisor, resident at the castle in Tal Mansfeld, to forbid Spangenberg and all his followers access to Dorothea and to the entire Vorderort section of the fortress.[112]

Although their actions during the controversy cannot be attributed solely to personal animosities against Spangenberg, the events noted above certainly could not have helped the situation. By alienating the countess directly and via her ladies-in-waiting, and by offending an influential advisor to Hans Georg, Spangenberg only added to the Vorderort counts' displeasure, which had been simmering since at least 1568. And indeed, the events involving Countess Dorothea appear to have been a turning point: after the autumn of 1573, the Vorderort counts began a campaign to expel Spangenberg and the Mansfelders, using their own authority and urging their feudal lords to do the same. Thus political expediency and family tradition merged with personal animosity to produce action.

But because the controversy was theological in its origins, a thorough examination of the Vorderort counts' actions and motivations must necessarily raise the question of their views on doctrine. As noted, they did not involve themselves directly, but they did condemn the Mansfelders teachings, both in print and by their actions. In early 1574, Mencel and the Eislebeners responded to a pamphlet published

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[110] Etzrodt, "Spangenberg und die Altgräfin Dorothea," 26.

[111] "Denn was man zu Mansfeld in den Schloßkyrchen für affenspiel mit dem frewlein von Wildenfels und Jungfraw Claren getrieben hat, daß dieselben habe offene Abbit thun müssen, darumb daß sye mit E. G. fraw Mutter bey uns zu Eißleben communiciret haben, das werden E. G. wissen." Etzrodt, "Spangenberg und die Altgräfin Dorothea," 27. Etzrodt does not mention where he obtained this quotation, and I have been unable to verify it with archival evidence.

[112] Etzrodt, "Spangenberg und die Altgräfin Dorothea," 27.

by the Hinterort counts, Volrad and Carl. To the superintendent's response, the Vorderort counts (along with the Hinterort countess, Margaretha) attached their *imprimatur*, thereby publicly proclaiming their doctrinal position, stating:

> It is a fact that the task falls not only to you, the pastors, but also most certainly to us to publicize your much-needed response and fundamental objections to the evil and mounting errors. Moreover, with this treatise, you will acknowledge your innocence and thoroughly warn, in a Christian manner, against the introduction of new and damned opinions long ago rejected by common consent of the Christian Church. And then we also will not be despised, as if we wish to knowingly and willingly support people convinced of false teaching; rather [we desire] even more so, that the opposite appear to be the case.[113]

Thus the counts declared their support for Mencel and the Eislebeners without getting personally involved in the doctrinal argument, an approach it should be noted, that falls closely in line with the Eislebeners' view that the theologians held primary responsibility for deciding questions of doctrine, while the laity (and therefore lay rulers too) should avoid direct involvement.[114]

An even more dramatic and public denunciation of the Mansfelders' theology occurred in 1574 when the Vorderort count, Hans Albrecht, took the drastic step of having his wife's body exhumed from the city church in Tal Mansfeld, an event described by Spangenberg as follows:

> In October an angry Count Hans Albrecht had the wonderful epitaph for his wife, which he had had erected in the city church of Tal Mansfeld, ripped out and brought to Eisleben. There he had it installed in the St. Andreas Church. And on November 15, he had his wife exhumed and brought to Eisleben as if it were a holy place. In the process, all sorts of desecration of the remains took place.[115]

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[113] "In ansehung/ das nicht allein inen/ den Predicanten/ Sondern auch Uns mercklich daran gelegen/ das solche ire notwendige verantwortung/ und gründliche ablehnung/ unbillich zugemessener Irthumbe/ an tag kome. Auff das hiedurch ire unschuld erkennet/ menniglich für einführung newer/ und durch Christlicher Kirchen erkentnis fur langst verworffen/ und verdampter Opinionen/ Christlich gewarnet. Und denn auch wir dafur nicht geachtet werden/ als wolten wir falscher Lere uberzeugten Leuten fursetzlich und wissend den rücken halten/ Sondern das auch viel mehr das gegentheil erscheine.…" Countess Margeretha and Counts Hans George, Hans Albrecht, Hans Hoyer, and Bruno, Introduction to the Eislebeners *Notwendige Verantwortunge*, 1–2.

[114] See chapter three, "The Pastors and Their Parishioners," esp. [119–126].

[115] "Im October hat G. Hans Albrecht im Zorn das herrliche Epitaphium, so er seiner Gemahel in die Thalkirche setzen lassen, widerum abgebrochen und nach

Although it would be dangerous to posit too closely a specific theological motive for the count's actions, he does appear to have taken the issue of heresy in Tal Mansfeld seriously. His response suggests that he may have believed that heresy literally infected those with whom it came into contact; the heterodox teachings promulgated by the Mansfelders in the city church might infect not only the living, but the dead as well. Or he may merely have hoped to avoid appearing to support false doctrines through association. Having his wife's body interred in the 'headquarters' of the opposition might give the impression that he supported heresy. In any case, best to move the body to a place of safety, like a church in Eisleben that remained holy because the doctrine taught there was pure. In either case, this radical act made a bold and public statement regarding his position in the debate over the doctrine of original sin.

Neither of these examples demonstrates the intense interest and involvement in the doctrinal aspects of the controversy to be found among the Hinterort and Mittelort counts. Indeed, the Vorderort counts appear less concerned with searching for doctrinal purity and more intent on ensuring its promulgation in their lands, a small, but important distinction. The Vorderort counts kept their distance from the details of the doctrinal complexities while publicly displaying their support for the Eislebeners.

The *Sequestration* was undoubtedly the single most decisive factor for the Vorderort counts during the controversy over original sin. Its debilitating effects left them subservient to their sequesterers, without room to maneuver on the doctrinal issue itself. But it was not the only factor motivating them to support the Eislebeners and condemn the Mansfelders. Their family's history and tradition of support for the Albertine Saxons, hostile relationship to the early Reformation, personal animosity toward Spangenberg, and, to some degree, their own theological leanings, all converged under the pressures of the *Sequestration*. As a result, they opposed Spangenberg and his lay followers with a zeal unwarranted by political concerns alone. In doing so, they kept their distance from the substance of the debate,

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Eißleben führen und daselbst in S. Andreas Kirchen aufrichten und den 15. Novemb. sein Gemahl auch wieder ausgraben und nach Eißleben, als an einen heiligen Ort, führen lassen. Dabei sich allerlei Unrat mit dem Gebeinen zugetragen." Spangenberg, *Mansfeldische Chronica*, in *Mansfelder Blätter* 30 (1916): 99.

supporting the theologians whom they considered to be correct, but only in their political capacities and as patrons of specific churches.

Conclusion

Viewed from its broadest perspective, the forceful imposition of the Eislebener position on original sin in the territory of Mansfeld by August of Saxony and Joachim Frederick of the archdiocese of Magdeburg represents one small episode in the march toward doctrinal definition and the elimination of heterodox opinions that characterized the late sixteenth century. Closer inspection, however, reveals the deep complexities of the situation. What began as a theological debate between two groups of pastors quickly acquired new meanings when it entered a complex array of relationships among the counts and between them and their feudal lords. These princes, led by August of Saxony, took the opportunities presented to them to increase their influence in the territory as part of an overall strategy of expansion, and the counts were forced to respond.

But to see the behavior of the counts from all three dynastic lines as purely reactions to the machinations of their feudal lords misses the mark. Their individual actions during the controversy, coupled with the fact that counts from both the Hinterort and Vorderort crossed their own dynastic line's official position in choosing which side to support, indicate that other forces also influenced these laity. Widely differing family histories and traditions played one important role. The Mittelort and Hinterort counts, with close familial ties to the early Reformation, believed that the Mansfelders' views represented the continuation of Luther's teachings. Their family tradition, in combination with their own professed theological leanings, pushed them in the direction of the Mansfelders. The Vorderort counts, by contrast, had no tradition of support for the early Reformation. Time and again they had allied themselves with the Albertine Saxons, even to the point of fighting against the interests of the majority of Protestant princes (including their Hinterort cousins) in the Schmalkald War. Their decision to support Mencel was not motivated exclusively by political concerns, but such considerations had taken precedence in the past and did so again this time.

The actions of each group of counts during the controversy also demonstrate contrasting visions of the role of the lay ruler in society, especially in relationship to the church. The Hinterort counts, spurred

on by what they understood to be the responsibilities of the Christian prince and animated by Spangenberg's admonitions that each Christian had the responsibility to give an account of his or her faith, delved into the details of the doctrinal controversy in a way that their Vorderort cousins did not. The Hinterort counts demonstrate a clear understanding of the central issue, along with its broader implications for Lutheran theology. But composing pamphlets and taking part in debates was not the proper role of the prince, if we are to believe the reaction of the elector and administrator to the Hinterort counts' firsthand involvement in the controversy. Many princes of the time, while deeply involved in issues related to the church and religion, did not consider it their domain to become too intimately involved with precise questions of doctrine, an approach favored by the Vorderort counts in their support of the Eislebeners.

Finally, personal preferences and animosities also affected the counts' judgments during the controversy. On the one hand, during the controversy Spangenberg stretched his relationship with the Vorderort counts, already under severe strain, to its breaking point. The Vorderort counts' enthusiasm in pursuing the dean and his lay followers had, it seems, a personal component. On the other hand, the amicable relationship between Spangenberg and the Hinterort counts is confirmed after Spangenberg's expulsion when Count Volrad invited his theologian to the *Newe Hütte*, Volrad's estate just beyond the borders of the territory. There the two men lived for two years before moving together to Strasbourg, all the while the count supporting Spangenberg financially. Such evidence points to a close personal relationship between the two.

In the end, a complex web of political, social, and economic factors coupled with traditional identities and religious convictions informed the actions of the counts during the controversy, an amalgamation that demonstrates how deeply these laymen's and laywomen's religiosity was bound up in a wide variety of factors. Among them must surely be the message they were hearing from the two groups of pastors, the Mansfelders for the Hinterort and Mittelort counts, and the Eislebeners for the Vorderort counts. But significant among them must also be a deep interest in the intricacies of doctrine for the Hinterort and Mittelort counts, and the less involved, but equally strong conviction that it was their obligation to promote true doctrine and eradicate false teachings in their lands for the Vorderort counts. In both cases, doctrine played a significant role in these lay rulers' religiosity. But what of the laity in general? It is to them that we now turn.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE "HERETICS" OF MANSFELD

The controversy over original sin began in the academy, made its way into the pastoral circles and print shops, and echoed through the palaces and chancelleries. But in the territory of Mansfeld, it made its biggest impact among the general populace, seizing the imagination of a sizable portion of the laity. Contemporary accounts recall the tensions that arose between the lay adherents of the Eislebeners and Mansfelders, as the counts and pastors warned their higher-ups repeatedly of the potential for uproar, and with good reason. On more than one occasion Eislebener mobs cursed Mansfelder pastors and counts, who became the targets of their stones, while Eislebener pastors, particularly those recently installed in the place of their exiled opponents, were met with catcalls, hostility, and threats of bodily harm. Moreover the miners fought in the streets and taverns over the issue. Such incidents indicate that the laity on both sides was deeply engaged. But why?

Unfortunately for the Eislebener laity, answers to this question remain elusive due to an absence of sources. The Eislebener pastors, it will be recalled, actively dissuaded their lay followers from becoming involved firsthand in the debate. As a result, no lay statements of belief, no letters or discussions of the controversy, nor even the names of individuals most closely involved have survived. More importantly, as adherents to the "winning" side in the debate, the territorial church had no reason to focus its attention on them after the invasion of Tal Mansfeld in late 1574 when the controversy was ended by force. For these people, it seems, the entire event quickly faded into the past. In the final analysis, because they remained faithful to the position deemed orthodox by the territorial church, these laity left behind little evidence.

The Mansfelder laity, by contrast, was part of a resistance movement that produced such a unique variety of sources that it is possible to analyze and isolate the forces and issues that influenced them during and after the controversy. Many of the sources they created were in response to the encouragement of the Mansfelder pastors to become

involved in the debate. In particular, some of the lay confessions regarding the nature of original sin fall into this category. But most are the products of the efforts undertaken to stamp out the "Manichaean heresy" by the combined forces of the superintendent and the territorial church, the Vorderort counts (even in their diminished capacities), and the elector of Saxony and administrator of the archdiocese of Magdeburg. The most revealing of these sources are a series of documents produced in preparation for the 1579 parish visitation of Tal Mansfeld, when the superintendent, Vorderort counts, and administrator began an offensive against the "Manichaeans."[1] As groundwork for this event, the pastors in the city, Eislebeners installed as replacements for Spangenberg and his clerical colleagues, wrote extensive reports about their efforts to reintegrate Tal Mansfeld's "heretical" inhabitants into the official church. The clerics also responded to the superintendent's request to identify the worst "troublemakers."

A variety of archival materials exist as a result of these efforts including letters, reports of hearings before the consistory or more commonly the dean in Tal Mansfeld, and statements of confession and retraction as well as pastoral critiques of these confessions, all part of the "official" church's efforts to recall the Mansfelders into the fold.[2] These are not consistorial records in the classic sense, as few of them are protocols from that body's regular sittings. In fact, the superintendent and territory's pastorate outside Tal Mansfeld played a limited direct role in the action, probably as the result of the territory's unique ecclesiastical structure. The nine deans who reported directly to the superintendent had far-reaching responsibilities, but also a degree of autonomy. In addition, the office of dean in Tal Mansfeld had been traditionally filled by a powerful figure, first Michael Coelius, then Cyriakus Spangenberg, and four years after his expulsion, Georg Autumnus, a future superintendent of the territory. Thus the Tal Mansfeld deans and their lieutenants, not the consistory in Eisleben, provide most information on the laity in Tal Mansfeld.

Another truly unique source, a further a product of the offensive against the Mansfelders, is the report of a debate that occurred in 1580

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[1] Max Könnecke, ed., "Die evangelischen Kirchenvisitationen des 16. Jahrhunderts in der Grafschaft Mansfeld: Die dritte Kirchenvisitation unter Menzel in der Grafschaft Mansfeld," *Mansfelder Blätter* 19 (1905): 1–36.

[2] Many of these may be found in Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, *Streit wegen der Erbsünde.*

in Tal Mansfeld pitting the dean, Autumnus, and two fellow pastors representing the official church (Eislebeners), against eighteen laymen who took the Mansfelder side.[3] Sent by Autumnus to the superintendent, the report provides a brief description of the debated theses and the outcome of these discussions, but the dean also furnishes citations that indicate exactly where in the protocols the superintendent could find the dictation of the complete discussion. It is clear from these citations that the protocols, no longer extant, ran over two hundred folio sides, a source that might have been a treasure for understanding the views and motivations of the laity. Nonetheless, as a lengthy summary of the debate, the report itself provides invaluable information for understanding lay thought.

Unfortunately, the only extant records from the Eisleben consistory date from 1584–1588.[4] These protocols provide some evidence regarding the Mansfelder laity, but the most important years, 1571 to 1583, are missing. Although there is evidence of strong lay support for the Mansfelder position in the city of Eisleben, the absence of protocols means that little information survives on those individuals and the "official" church's efforts to convince them of their errors. Furthermore, it is likely that the other eight deans in the territory would have been responsible for disciplining the Mansfelder adherents in their own districts rather than sending suspected laity directly to the consistory in Eisleben, sources that, if they exist, I have not yet found. Thus we are left with only partial information regarding the number of Mansfelder lay partisans and the efforts to reincorporate them into the "official" church if they lived outside of Tal Mansfeld.

Nonetheless intriguing bits of information regarding the situation in Eisleben provide glimpses into the tensions there. In particular letters from the Vorderort counts to the Saxon elector and his *Sequestration* representative in Eisleben paint a chaotic picture.[5] Because the Vorderort counts lost the authority to prosecute criminals in the *Sequestration*, they were forced to refer such cases to the elector, with the result that their correspondence offers much insight into

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[3] Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 834, *G. Autumni decan zu M. Disputation mit Timoth. Schellern u. Consorten wegen Flacianismi 1580*.

[4] Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 10, *Consistorium Protokollen* 1584–1588.

[5] Dresden Loc. 9745/7, Dresden Loc. 9756/13, Dresden Loc. 9742/18, Dresden Loc. 9742/18, Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 828.

who the "troublemakers" were in Eisleben, and information about the details of their activities, their professions, and their doctrinal positions.

Such a variety of documents from the pens of clerics, counts, and the general populace themselves allow unprecedented access into lay religiosity in late Reformation Germany. The remainder of this book is an attempt to tease out the various forces, both faith-based and more secular, that drove many laity to adopt the Mansfelder views on original sin. But prior to analyzing these stimuli, it is necessary to first introduce the Mansfelder laity and to describe their actions during and after the controversy, behavior that demonstrates a deep commitment to their cause.

The Mansfelder Laity

Although it is impossible to identify exactly how many individuals took the Mansfelder side, contemporary observers indicate that the number was high, especially in and around Tal Mansfeld. Cyriakus Nicolai, an Eislebener pastor invested there in 1578, wrote that upon his arrival he found few individuals free from the taint of "Manichaeism."[6] The reports of the pastors, the extant consistory records, and the visitation protocols from this period mention 154 individuals specifically, each accused of being Manichaean in their views on original sin. Most likely these people were the tip of the iceberg, the most vocal and outspoken adherents of the Mansfelder position.

Of the 154 individuals found in the sources, 111 are men and 43 are women. All but twenty-two lived in or near Tal Mansfeld.[7] Of the twenty-two not from Tal Mansfeld, ten resided in Eisleben, two each in Artern and Hettstedt, and one each in Volkstedt, Großörner, Hergisdorf, Tottendorf, Augsdorff, Wimmelrode, Helbra, and Wolframsdorf. However, the concentration of Mansfelder laity mentioned in Tal Mansfeld is likely due in part to the Eislebener authorities' focus on that area, which produced the largest number of sources and undoubtedly skews the figures.

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[6] Cyriakus Nicolai, "Historischer und summarischer Bericht von dem Zustande der Kirchen im Thall Mansfeldt von Michaelis 1578 bis auf Quasimodogeniti 1579," *Mansfelder Blätter* 19 (1905): 27–34, here at 27.

[7] For two their place of residence is unclear.

Of the twelve cities and towns that the "Manichaeans" called home, five (Hergisdorf, Artern, Hettstedt, Wimmelrode, and Wolframsdorf) did not have a Mansfelder pastor expelled, suggesting that there was no resolved clerical representative of the Mansfelder views there. These lay folk must have received their information elsewhere. In two of the towns, Hettstedt and Artern, the pastors actively opposed the Mansfelders, publishing and sermonizing against them,[8] thereby suggesting even greater efforts by the laity to seek out the Mansfelder position. In the remainder of the cases, laymen and laywomen took the Mansfelder position when their pastor also advocated it. But while twenty nine cities or towns in the territory saw their Mansfelder pastor expelled, in twenty-one of these cities no layperson appears in the sources as a Mansfelder. Although the presence of such individuals cannot be rule out, this fact would seem to suggest that the presence of a Mansfelder pastor did not always convince the laity. But as noted above, little evidence for cases outside of Tal Mansfeld has survived.

Of the 111 men named in the sources, the occupations of sixty are known, a breakdown of which looks as follows. The urban trades form the largest group representing 35% of the total with known occupations, a figure that suggests that the Mansfelders' message appealed to an urban middle class. But the category of "professionals", the vast majority of whom were minor government officials, comes close with 30% of the total. Not included among them are the city council, whose members would have had other occupations in addition to their governmental duties. Prominent among this group are employees of the Mittelort and Hinterort lines, but this is to be expected as those counts were the Mansfelder clerics' biggest supporters. Nevertheless, the significant number of local government officials who were involved, even with the city council excluded, suggests that political factors played an important role in the controversy, a prospect that will be addressed in the next chapter. The third largest group was the miners, representing 29% of the total, not a surprise as the mining industry was by far the biggest employer in the region accounting for two-thirds of Tal Mansfeld's jobs. Only

[8] Andreas Hoppenrodt, chief pastor in the city of Hettstedt, wrote passionately against the Mansfelders. See Andreas Hoppenrodt, *Propositiones de peccato originali confessiones loco scriptae* (Eisleben: Urban Gaubisch, 1573); and *Christliche und notwendige Antwort auff M. Spangenbergs Lesterschriften* (Eisleben: Urban Gaubisch, 1574).

Table 1. The occupations of the Mansfelder laity

Occupational Category	Occupation	Total	Percent of Total
Professionals	11 local officials 5 advisors to the Hinterort and Middelort counts 1 jurist 1 schoolteacher	18	30%
Urban trades	5 bakers 3 tailors 3 shop owners 2 book-binders 2 furriers 1 butcher 1 printer 1 weaver 1 tanner 1 goldsmith 1 knife smith	21	35%
Miners		17	29%
Rural trades	1 peasant 1 vintner 1 basket maker	3	5%
Undetermined	1 cook	1	1%

three individuals from rural trades appear, a number that suggests that the countryside was less involved in the controversy, although the territory's deanate ecclesiastical structure may have meant that the rural dissidents were prosecuted elsewhere. These statistics, while revealing, represent only slightly more than half the men accused of being Mansfelder adherents. But even in light of such limitations, most significant is the fact that the Mansfelder message clearly held appeal across the social spectrum.

Of the thirty-five Tal Mansfeld city council members and burghers imprisoned by the administrator at the time of the invasion, only twenty appear again in the sources as committed followers of the Mansfelders. This is perhaps in part because during the period 1575 and 1579, Eislebener officials did little to directly prosecute the Mansfelder adherents. Thus, it could be that some of those who were arrested in 1575 died before persecutions began, and therefore their names no

longer appear in the records after their initial incarceration. But even taking this possibility into account, some appear to have had no lasting loyalty to the Mansfelder position. In light of their positions as city council members and leaders of the community, it stands to reason that political factors heavily influenced their initial involvement in the controversy. Contrariwise, over half continued their support for the Mansfelder cause over the long term.

Evidence further indicates that only the Drachstedt brothers of Eisleben, Hans, a jurist, and Philip, a syndicus, as well as Cyriakus Kaufmann, nephew of Martin Luther, attended university. No other specific information exists regarding the level of education attained by the adherents of Spangenberg, although it seems that literacy rates were quite high in the territory.[9]

Forty three women are mentioned as devotees of the Mansfelder understanding of original sin. In only four instances has information other than their own names or their husband's names survived, while in thirty-four cases the accuser stated explicitly "and his wife" when a man was charged with "Manichaean beliefs." It is tempting to assume that the accuser, a newly installed Eislebener pastor in this case, would have taken for granted that a man's wife held opinions similar to her husband's, but evidence suggests that this was not the case. "And his wife" is not always included when a man is implicated. Furthermore, a wife is sometimes referred to without the husband. In one list of the accused, the entries "Hans Leonharten's wife" or "Christofell Hanen's wife" appear without any mention of suspicions surrounding their husbands.[10] Although these women may have been widows, it seems that the convention of the times was not to refer to women by their Christian names, but through their husbands. What is certain, however, is that the pastors involved in reintegrating the Mansfelder laity into the official church were far too careful and exact in their efforts to throw names around offhandedly. Clearly in some cases these women were seen as autonomous actors.

Of the eight women whose names are known, two were immediate relatives of Spangenberg. For two the occupations are known: both were school-teachers. All eight women resided in Tal Mansfeld. Thus

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[9] See chapter three, "The Pastors and their Parishioners," esp. [109].

[10] Cyriakus Nicolai, "Antwort auf die vorgelegten Fragen," *Mansfelder Blätter* 19 (1905): 13–19, here at 18.

the vast majority of women known to have been involved in the controversy (82%) took the same position as their husbands. Only a few (18%) appear to have become Mansfelders without the support of a husband. But the evidence suggests that the dearth of specific information on the women does not necessarily correspond to the role they played in the controversy. The pastors who replaced Spangenberg and his colleagues claimed that their predecessors' wives were instrumental in exciting the people against them.[11] Furthermore, Spangenberg himself is specifically accused of attempting to convert women as a means to win over their husbands, suggesting that women were in the forefront.[12]

This description of the Mansfelder laity leaves the image of a group fairly closely tied to Tal Mansfeld that crossed gender, education, social status, and even urban/rural divides to some extent. In fact, it would be difficult to picture a more diverse group coming together in late sixteenth-century Germany than the one demonstrated in Table 2 below.

Efforts to Establish a Shadow Church

During the six-year period following the expulsion of the Tal Mansfeld pastorate, lay adherents endeavored to establish an underground church, impulses for which came from counts, clergy, and the common folk. No evidence exists of a master plan, although it is difficult to imagine that the pastors who remained in the area did not exert some influence. But most often, it appears that the Mansfelder laity worked as the situation required, in an ad hoc manner, using different methods and approaches to avoid or disrupt the official church, and to make their own provisions for worshipping and receiving the sacraments. In 1578, when the Eislebener Cyriakus Nicolai wrote his initial report to the consistory describing the status of the congregation in Tal Mansfeld, he noted that many parishioners, instead of coming to church, did one of three things: read Luther's postils in house churches they had created, gathered in conventicles where they heard a sermon by a Mansfelder pastor who had remained in the area, or

[11] Letter of Andreas Drasdo and Daniel Hauenschildt to the Vorderort counts, February 13, 1576. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 831, fol. 1v.

[12] See chapter three, "The Pastors and their Parishioners," [120–121].

Table 2. The Mansfelder laity

Name	Location	City Council Member	Burgher taken captive on January 1, 1575	Wife specifically mentioned	Occupation	Woman alone	Political office other than city council member	University Education	Family Connections
1. Anna Adams	Tal Mansfeld				School teacher	X			
2. Hans Albrecht	Tal Mansfeld		X		Miner				
3. Hans Annenberger	Tal Mansfeld		X						
4. Caspar Aschenborner	Tal Mansfeld	X		X			Sheriff and judge in the mining district		
5. Claus Bach	Tal Mansfeld								
6. Dieterich Bach	Tal Mansfeld								
7. Abel Bernhardt	Tal Mansfeld	X			Butcher				
8. Hans Bernhardt's Wife	Tal Mansfeld					X			
9. Nicel Beyer	Tal Mansfeld				Tailor				
10. Jacoff Bischoff	Tal Mansfeld			X					
11. Matthes Breyther	Tal Mansfeld	X			Tailor				
12. Peter Choßal	Tal Mansfeld			X					
13. Larent Dockhorn	Wimmelrode				Farmer				
14. Hans Drachstedt	Eisleben				Jurist			X	Brother of Philip
15. Philip Drachstedt	Eisleben						Syndikus in Breslau	X	Brother of Hans
16. Hans Dennert	Artern				Linen Weaver				
17. Greta Dreylings	Tal Mansfeld					X			Stöckel's daughter
18. Merten Eckartt	Tal Mansfeld			X					Probably related to Flederwisch
19. Heinrich Ehrmans	Tal Mansfeld			X	Vintner				
20. Thomas Einer	unknown								
21. Hans Engel	Tal Mansfeld		X	X	Baker				

Table 2 (*cont.*)

Name	Location	City Council Member	Burgher taken captive on January 1, 1575	Wife specifically mentioned	Occupation	Woman alone	Political office other than city council member	University Education	Family Connections
22. Hans Engelmann	Tal Mansfeld								
23. George Fischer	Tal Mansfeld		X		Miner				
24. Jochem Flederwisch	Tal Mansfeld			X	Bookbinder				
25. Hans Garten	unknown								
26. Hans Gesellen	Tal Mansfeld			X					Mother also mentioned as "Manichean"
27. Michel Glimahns	Tal Mansfeld			X					
28. Ludwig Gleißenberg	Tal Mansfeld						Military officer for Count Volrad[13]		
29. Philip Gluke	Tal Mansfeld			X					
30. Peter Gösseln	Tal Mansfeld		X		Miner				
31. Gerharden Grunden	Artern				Small business owner				
32. Hans Gutwill	Tal Mansfeld	X			Tailor				
33. Meister Hans	Tal Mansfeld			X	Tailor				
34. Meister Hans	Tal Mansfeld			X	Barrel maker				
35. Christofell Hanen	Tal Mansfeld			X					
36. Hans Happach	Tal Mansfeld			X			City official of some sort		
37. Andreas Hartmen	Tal Mansfeld	X					Town secretary and sheriff after 1576		

[13] Referred to as a *Zeugmeister*, which is defined as a military administrator or officer responsible for the upkeep of weapons or the individual in charge of the weapons used for hunting.

Table 2 (*cont.*)

Name	Location	City Council Member	Burgher taken captive on January 1, 1575	Wife specifically mentioned	Occupation	Woman alone	Political office other than city council member	University Education	Family Connections
38. Hans Halcke	Eisleben				Bookbinder/seller				
39. Hans Herman	Tal Mansfeld		X		Miner				
40. Hans Barten Hennigen	Tal Mansfeld								
41. Wolf Hirsch	Tal Mansfeld		X	X	Miner				Wife is Osanna Haccen; in business with C. Winterstein
42. Benedict Hoffmann	Volkstedt								
43. Merten Hoppe	Tal Mansfeld								
44. Hans Horn	Tal Mansfeld	X			Furrier				
45. Hans Jacob	Tal Mansfeld		X		Miner				
46. David Jan	Hettstedt			X	Tailor				
47. Jochem?	Tal Mansfeld				Basketmaker				
48. Hans Kammerfürste	Tal Mansfeld								
49. Cyriakus Kauffmann	Tal Mansfeld	X					Mayor and sheriff	X	Luther's nephew
50. Johann Kauffmann	Tal Mansfeld			X					
51. Kilian Kaufmann	Tal Mansfeld						Sheriff		
52. Zacharias Kegel	Tal Mansfeld								
53. George Kischer	Tal Mansfeld		X						
54. Hans von Koburg	Tal Mansfeld	X							
55. Georg Koch	Tal Mansfeld								
56. 'old Kolerin'	Tal Mansfeld					X			
57. Simon Köttener	Tal Mansfeld								
58. Barthel Ladtsch	Tal Mansfeld	X							

Table 2 (*cont.*)

Name	Location	City Council Member	Burgher taken captive on January 1, 1575	Wife specifically mentioned	Occupation	Woman alone	Political office other than city council member	University Education	Family Connections
59. Michael Langen	Hettstedt				Tanner		The "murdered" M. Andreas Langen's Brother		The 'murdered' M. Andreas Langen's brother
60. Hans Leimbach	Tal Mansfeld	X							
61. Hans Leonharten	Tal Mansfeld	X		X	Shop owner				
62. Lorenz Luder	Tal Mansfeld		X		Miner				
63. Veit Luder	Tal Mansfeld		X		Miner				Luther's nephew
64. Rose Ludimode	Tal Mansfeld	X							
65. Paul Marckartt	Tal Mansfeld		X		Miner				
66. Hans Matts	Tal Mansfeld			X	Teacher				
67. Balten Metzler	Tal Mansfeld			X			Advisor to Count Volrad		
68. Barttell Micheln	Eisleben								
69. Hans Moltzer	Tal Mansfeld		X		Cook		Count Peter Ernst's cook		
70. Donat Muckart	Tal Mansfeld		X		Miner				
71. Bastian Müller	Tal Mansfeld								
72. Philip Ömeler	Tal Mansfeld	X			Goldsmith		Sheriff		
73. Hans Ötzen	Tal Mansfeld								
74. Heinrich Pauschen (Bausch)	Gross Oernern						Knight		
75. Andreas Petri	Eisleben				Book printer				
76. Jacob Ramholden	Helbra								
77. (Seb)Bastian Rauch	Tal Mansfeld			X	Miner				
78. Barthel Regener	Eisleben			X			Administrator in the mining district		Spangenberg's brother-in-law
79. Balzar Rehe	Tal Mansfeld			X					

Table 2 (*cont.*)

Name	Location	City Council Member	Burgher taken captive on January 1, 1575	Wife specifically mentioned	Occupation	Woman alone	Political office other than city council member	University Education	Family Connections
80. Anthonius Reichart	Tal Mansfeld			X			Official of some sort		
81. Andres Reichart	Tal Mansfeld								
82. Heinrich Reinicke	Tal Mansfeld								
83. Antonius Richter	Eisleben				*Freigut* owner		Much contact with Count Carl		Houses Michael Spangenberg
84. David Rorer	Tal Mansfeld			X					
85. Anders Sachsse	Tal Mansfeld	X		X			Sheriff		
86. Thimotheus Schaller	Tal Mansfeld			X			Advisor to Count Volrad		
87. Bastian Schanckenpfeil	Tal Mansfeld		X		Miner				
88. Michel Schlanke	Tal Mansfeld			X					
89. Christofell Schwartze	Tal Mansfeld						Administrator in the mining district		
90. Hans Schwemen	Augsdorff								
91. Michell Seiffart	Tal Mansfeld								
92. die alte Siebern	Tal Mansfeld					X			Lives with Haccen
93. Simon von Chemnitz	Tal Mansfeld			X					
94. Katherina Spangenberg Cyriakus' Mother	Tal Mansfeld / Eisleben					X			Johann's Widow
95. Cyriakus Spangenberg's Daughter	Tal Mansfeld					X			
96. Alexander Spiessen	Hergsdorf						Chancellor for Counts Volrad and Carl		
97. Alexander Speiß's son	Hergsdorf								
98. Adam Strang	Tal Mansfeld			X					
99. Christoff Stöckel	Tal Mansfeld				Shoemaker				Daughter married Spangenberg's son

Table 2 (*cont.*)

Name	Location	City Council Member	Burgher taken captive on January 1, 1575	Wife specifically mentioned	Occupation	Woman alone	Political office other than city council member	University Education	Family Connections
100. Christoff Tauer	Eisleben				Baker				
101. Blaisius Teufel	Tal Mansfeld		X		Miner				
102. Nickel von der Thannen	Eisleben								Guardian of Count Volrad's son
103. Meister Thomas	Tal Mansfeld			X	Knife smith				
104. Sieffart Trümpler	Tal Mansfeld			X	Baker				
105. Sieffart Trümpler's householder, Abraham N.									
106. Merten Trümpeler	Tal Mansfeld	X		X	Baker				
107. Martin Wagner	Tal Mansfeld								Spangenberg says he was tortured.
108. Jacob Wenning	Tal Mansfeld	X		X			Sheriff		
109. Martin Wenige	Tal Mansfeld		X		Baker				
110. Baltin Wenige	Tal Mansfeld		X		Baker				
111. Hans Wigenden	Tal Mansfeld		X		Miner				
112. Anne Wincken	Tal Mansfeld				School teacher	X			Johann's widow
113. Bastian Winterstein	Tal Mansfeld				Miner		Administrator in the mining district		
114. Claus Winterstein	Tal Mansfeld				Miner				
115. Görge Winterstein	Tal Mansfeld		X		Miner				
116. Dietterich von Wolframsdorff	Wolframsdorf						Noble addressed as "Edlen und Ernvesten"		
117. Bastian Zatschen	Tal Mansfeld	X			Furrier				
118. Christina Zinken	Tal Mansfeld					X			
119. Daniel the Zuckermacher	Eisleben								
120. Anonymous Noble	Tottendorf								

left Tal Mansfeld (or the entire territory) to receive absolution and the Eucharist, and to be married by Mansfelder pastors living nearby.[14] Nicolai's assessment well described the reality of the situation, as evidence of all three actions is abundant.

Covert or semi-covert house churches proliferated. In 1572, on the authority of the Vorderort counts, the superintendent deposed Nicolaus Hacus from his position as pastor in Vatteroda for his Mansfelder leanings.[15] Johann Rauch, pastor at Wulfferoda, was dismissed under similar circumstances in 1574. The two pastors found refuge and unofficial posts in the small town of Ziegelrode, located directly between Eisleben and Tal Mansfeld, where the inhabitants welcomed them and where they received the tacit approval of the Mittelort count, Christoff, a Mansfelder supporter. The citizens of Ziegelrode allowed the inhabitants of Tal Mansfeld, who had been refused the Eucharist in their own church, to come to Ziegelrode and receive the sacraments from these Mansfelder pastors.[16] This practice continued for at least three years, for in May of 1578, a councilor of the Vorderort count, Hans Georg, noted its presence disapprovingly. In a report to the count this advisor warned of the increasing strength and influence of the "Manichaeans," mentioning specifically that on Pentecost, twenty people from Tal Mansfeld had traveled to Ziegelrode to receive the Eucharist and to avoid their own pastors whom the superintendent had newly ordained.[17] It is unclear exactly when and under what circumstances this arrangement ended, but the pastors were eventually expelled from the town.[18]

Even after the possibility of attending services in Ziegelrode disappeared, the option of leaving the territory to worship and to receive the sacraments remained open to the Mansfelders. Following his expulsion from Tal Mansfeld, Spangenberg traveled for some undisclosed length of time, finding his way to Prague[19] and stopping in Bavaria during

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[14] Nicolai, *Historischer und summarischer Bericht*, 28.
[15] Spangenberg, *Mansfeldische Chronica*, in *Mansfelder Blätter* 30 (1916): 146.
[16] Spangenberg, *Mansfeldische Chronica*, in *Mansfelder Blätter* 30 (1916): 185.
[17] Dresden, Loc. 9756/13, fol. 262v. The report is dated May 18, 1578.
[18] Spangenberg, *Mansfeldische Chronica*, in *Mansfelder Blätter* 30 (1916): 186.
[19] Cyriakus Spangenberg, *Eine Christliche Comoedia Von dem Cananeischen Weiblein/ Matthei am 15. Capittel* (Schmalkalden: Michel Schmück, 1589), 5v. In the introduction to this work, Spangenberg says that he refined it for the third time in 1575, while in exile in Prague.

1575.[20] At some point soon thereafter, he returned to the area around Mansfeld, to a place called the *Newe Hütte* near Saalfeld. The *Newe Hütte*, built by the Hinterort count, Albrecht, father of Counts Volrad and Carl, was originally constructed as a mining camp, but with its elaborate complex of buildings it appears to have doubled as a retreat or summer residence.[21] Along with colleagues and other individuals who had been expelled from the territory due to their views on original sin, there Spangenberg remained under the protection of Count Volrad until 1580.[22] There the inhabitants of Tal Mansfeld came to hear sermons and to receive the sacraments[23] and, if the new Eislebener pastors in Tal Mansfeld are to be believed, also to be married.[24]

The final possibility open to the Mansfelder laity who desired the sacraments or to hear a sermon from a Mansfelder pastor, and by far the most popular, was to attend a secret conventicle. Almost immediately after the soldiers left Tal Mansfeld on January 4, 1575, accusations began that the inhabitants were gathering covertly. In a letter

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[20] Cyriakus Spangenberg, *Ein Christliches Spiel oder Comoedia, Aus dem Evangelio am Sontage Letare/ von 5 Gerstenbrodten und zween Fischen/ damit Christus fünff tausend Mann gespeiset/ Johan 6* (Schmalkalden: Michel Schmück, 1589), 9r. In the introduction to this work, Spangenberg explains that he wrote in exile in 1575 during a two-week, weather-induced stay in Bavaria at the pastor from Holtzkirchen's house.

[21] The "Newe Hütte" was a plot of land bought by Count Albrecht IV (1480–1560) from the counts of Schwartzburg for 1,200 florins. There he built a lumber mill and a smelting house. In 1524 he added a large house, surrounded by a moat, with four towers on the four corners, a chapel, brewery, bathhouse, kitchen, stall for horses, threshing floor, and a washhouse. He also constructed a group of apartments, all under the same roof, which housed the workers. The little community had a defensive work, a cellar, tailor shop, and other buildings to accommodate travelers. "And in summation," writes Spangenberg in his description of the New Hut, "this was a truly happy, winsome and, because of the temporary highway that passed by, well-placed complex, especially in summer (on account of the marvelous trees, which Count Albrecht himself had planted in groups of five). And here, along with our merciful lord Count Volrad, of blessed memory, I and other pastors who had been driven out remained in exile from 1576 until 1580." Spangenberg, *Mansfeldische Chronica*, in *Mansfelder Blätter* 28 (1914): 435–36.

[22] Little is known about exactly what went on at the New Hut, but Spangenberg mentions that they performed plays he had written. At one particular performance, two of Count Volrad's sons had roles, as did a young Polish noble. Spangenberg mentions that Count Volrad, sitting next to Wilhelm Sarcerius, was thrilled by the event. Spangenberg, *Eine Christliche Comoedia*, Introduction.

[23] Hans Leonharten, Hans Horn, and Philipp Ömeler all admit to having received the Eucharist at the New Hut. Nicolai, "Anwort auf die vorgelegten Fragen," *Mansfelder Blätter* 19 (1905): 14.

[24] Nicolai, "Historischer und summarischer Bericht," 28.

from February 1576, two churchmen who replaced the expelled pastors in Tal Mansfeld reported to the Vorderort counts that their predecessors continued to reenter the territory. Furthermore,

> Either of their own accord or through their wives who live in Tal Mansfeld, [they] excite and mislead the people, hold secret preaching and conventicles, and forbid the people to go to church and receive the sacraments from us under the pretext that they cannot do this in good conscience. [They] rile the people almost to the point of rebellion. Furthermore, they scatter their heretical books hither and thither among the laity.[25]

In 1578, Cyriakus Nicolai reported that Spangenberg's lieutenant, the cantor Benedictus Tauer, and a tanner from Hettstedt,[26] both banned from the territory, went from house to house confusing the citizens and presiding over conventicles.[27] Not only was the clergy scandalized by this fact, but in 1579 the Vorderort counts complained to the administrator that the expelled pastors continued to slink back into the territory, and warned him that the people might well rise up.[28]

Conventicles and secret preaching were not limited to Tal Mansfeld. Referring to the period between 1575 and 1578, Spangenberg noted that the Hinterort count, Carl, allowed preaching, the distribution of the Eucharist, baptisms,[29] and marriages to take place in his house in

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[25] "die dann durch sich selbs und dann auch durch Ihre weiber Im Thal Mansfeld wonend, die leute verhetzen, verleyten, heimliche predigetenn und conventicula halten, den leuten zu kirchenn zw gehen und die sacrament von uns zuempfahenn, mit vorwendung, das sie es mitt gutem Gewissen nicht thun können, verbietenn, und fast zu auffrhur anreitzung gebenn, auch Ihre gedruckte schwermbucher hin und wider bey den leutenn aussprengen." Andreas Drasdo and Daniel Hauenschildt to the Vorderort counts, February 13, 1576. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 831, fol. 1v.

[26] Probably Michael Langen.

[27] Nicolai, "Antwort auf die vorgelegten Fragen," 15.

[28] Letter from Vorderort counts, Hans Georg, Hans Albrecht, Hans Hoyer, and Bruno to the administrator of the archdiocese of Magdeburg's representative in the territory of Mansfeld, May 31, 1579. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 828, 58r–58v.

[29] Spangenberg includes baptism here among the sacraments and rites of the church that one could receive in this particular conventicle. There is also some evidence that the deposed pastors, still living in the territory, occasionally baptized babies, although this appears to have been a rarity. John Hainmuller, a pastor who had been dismissed from his office by the administrator of the archdiocese of Magdeburg, is accused of baptizing his own child at home, rather than allowing a properly installed pastor to baptize the child in a church. Dresden, Loc. 9742/18, fol. 2v. In the middle of the night, another deposed pastor still living in the territory was brought a baby born to a woman suffering from the plague. Because he baptized the child, he was chastized by the local magistrates for practicing without a proper call. Spangenberg, *Mansfeldische Chronica*, in *Mansfelder Blätter* 30 (1916): 225–26.

the Eisleben Neustadt.[30] This "congregation" was a source of constant irritation for the Vorderort counts and presumably the Eisleben consistory. But Count Carl's was not the only conventicle, nor the only force behind the secret meetings in Eisleben. In a letter to the elector of Saxony's representative in Eisleben, the Vorderort count, Hans Georg, described how Anthonius Reichart, a local dignitary, provided a meeting place for "all kinds of conventicles," which were then run by the pastor Wilhelm Sarcerius.[31] Although both had been warned repeatedly, they continued to inveigh against the "pious, pure, and Christian pastors,"[32] that is, their replacements. Elsewhere Sarcerius was accused of preaching in Count Carl's church,[33] while Michael Spangenberg, pastor and brother of Cyriakus, was charged with holding public conventicles in the "Leuter" alley in Eisleben.[34]

From the perspective of the Vorderort counts, the situation in Eisleben continued to deteriorate during the months following the invasion of Tal Mansfeld. Requesting that the elector of Saxony take action against the followers of Spangenberg, they noted that they had hoped the invasion would remove the "Manichaean threat."

From a purely logistical as well as legal standpoint, baptism was a more difficult sacrament to avoid in the "official" church than the Eucharist. If the child needed to be baptized quickly because its life was in danger, one could little risk the ride to Ziegelrode, the New Hut, or Count Carl the Elder's house. Furthermore, the child's name would not be added into the official baptismal records. So the followers of Spangenberg brought their children to the pastors of the approved church for baptism, which caused a great deal of friction, as the pastors were not always willing to accept the parents' choice of godparents.

[30] Spangenberg, *Mansfeldische Chronica,* in *Mansfelder Blätter* 30 (1916): 296.

[31] Wilhelm Sarcerius was the son of Mansfeld's third superintendent, Erasmus Sarcerius. Since 1567 he had been pastor at St. Peter and Paul's in Eisleben. In the first week of 1575, he was driven out of his office and house, along with his wife and children, "mit großem Unwillen und Betrübnis der ganzen Gemeine," says Spangenberg, *Mansfeldische Chronica*, in *Mansfelder Blätter* 30 (1916): 337. A sizable number of individuals from Eisleben who were adherents of Spangenberg's position congregated around the person of Sarcerius, for in the church book from the territory's chief church, St. Andreas in Eisleben, the entry from September 15, 1574 reads, "Daniel der Zuchermacher ist repellirt (Nämlich als Pathe) auctoritate totius ministerii propter factionem Sarcerianam." Hermann Größler, "Auzüge aus dem ältesten Kirchenbuch der St. Andreaskirche zu Eisleben (1569–85) in *Festschrift zur Bewillkommung des Harzvereins für Geschichte und Altertumskunde, den 26. und 27. Mai 1874 in Eisleben, vom Vereine für die Geschichte und Altertümer der Grafschaft Mansfeld* (Eisleben: Heinrich Reichardt, 1874), 66.

[32] Dresden, Loc. 9745/7, fol. 209r.

[33] Dresden, Loc. 9756/13, fol. 262v.

[34] Dresden, Loc. 9742/18, fol. 2r.

> But we have discovered to our pain that the misfortune not only has not been abolished in some areas, rather it gets worse and becomes more deeply entrenched. For not only are clandestine community churches established, which draw in the people and the entire community and in which there is preaching and the most worthy sacrament is administered under this error, but also all kinds of secret conventicles have crept into the homes of some private persons and subjects, chiefly of Sarcerius, Anthonius Richter, the sugar maker, Barttell Micheln, and the bookseller Herr Helcken.[35]

The Vorderort counts singled out the Eisleben city council, chastising them for allowing the conventicles to occur, a fact that raises the question of their complicity. In their own defense the council responded that they, too, were opposed to the Manichaean enthusiasm, but that conventicles were a matter for the consistory.[36]

There are hints of such conventicles in other areas of the territory as well. In the town of Hergisdorf, Alexander Spiessen, the chancellor for the Hinterort counts, Volrad and Carl, and Spiessen's son were accused of being Manichaeans who had fully separated themselves from the local congregation, and who harbored men who were "despisers of the church and its servants."[37] In the village of Tottendorf, an unnamed nobleman was charged with "Manichaeism" because he had surrounded himself with enthusiasts (*Schwärmer*) such as Koppichen, Koch, and others,[38] pastors who had been expelled from their posts for being adherents of the Mansfelder position.

The Mansfelder laity also had a propensity for disrupting worship services offered by their new pastors, a tradition that began exactly two days after the Magdeburg administrator's soldiers arrived in Tal

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[35] "Wir befinden aber, leider ferner mit schmertzenn, das dieses ungluck nicht alleine an ettlichen orthen nicht abgeschafft, und nachbleibett, sondern ferner teglichen uber die handt nimpt und tieffer einreisset. Dan nicht alleine offentliche winckell kirchen gehaltten, dahin die leutte und gantze versammlunge gezogenn, gepredigt, und die hochwirdige Sacrament in diesem Irthumb administriret worden, Sondern daruber auch bey ettliche Privat personen und underthanenn, allerley heimliche Conventicula inn ihren heusern einschleichenn, Wie dan vornemblichenn bey Sarcerio, Anthoni Richtern, Barttell Micheln, dem Zuckermacher und dem Buch fuhrer Helckenn geschicht." Letter from Counts Hans Georg, Hans Hoyer, and Bruno to Benno Pflugk, Electoral Saxony's representative, June 21, 1575. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 828, fol. 36v.

[36] Letter of the Eisleben city council to Benno Pflugk, Electoral Saxony's reprentative in Mansfeld, July 15, 1575. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 828, fol. 44v–45v.

[37] Könnecke, ed. "Die evangelischen Kirchenvisitationen," 65.

[38] Könnecke, ed. "Die evangelischen Kirchenvisitationen," 90.

Mansfeld. On Sunday, January 2, 1575 two Mansfelders sang "Lord Keep Us Steadfast in Thy Word" during the sermon of a temporary replacement pastor brought in to conduct the services.[39] From there the practice expanded. One of the Vorderort counts' advisors reported that the "Manichaeans" in Eisleben had recently disrupted the funeral of an Eislebener pastor who had been one of their most vocal critics. His death, writes the councilor, was met with jubilation.[40] At the funeral of Marten Kaufmann the laity yelled at the Eislebener pastors defiantly and threateningly.[41] When the superintendent sent a pastor to preach in Tal Mansfeld, the cleric was run off the road by "Manichaeans," and would have been killed had not a pious butcher come along and saved his life.[42] Physical threats to the new pastors were apparently quite real. The replacement pastors sent to Tal Mansfeld after the invasion wrote a series of letters requesting to be transferred to new posts for, they claimed, their lives were in great danger.[43]

In addition to disrupting the church services and funerals of their opponents, the Mansfelder laity also attended the burials of their own colleagues, even though the interment of Mansfelders in the churchyard had been forbidden.[44] A little more than a year after Spangenberg's expulsion, his mother[45] and not long thereafter, his

[39] Hoppenrodt and Titius, *Chronik der Stadt Hettstedt*, fol. 94r–v. Spangenberg also reports on this event in *Mansfeldische Chronica*, in *Mansfelder Blätter* 30 (1916): 87.

[40] Dresden, Loc. 9756/13, fol. 262v.

[41] Dresden, Loc. 9745/7, fol. 209r.

[42] Dresden, Loc. 9756/13, fol. 262v.

[43] Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 831, fols. 1v and 7v.

[44] The official notification that Mansfelders were to be denied burial in the churchyard no longer exists. However, Spangenberg mentions it repeatedly in his *Mansfeldische Chronica* (see the following two footnotes). Furthermore, when the Eisleben city council refused to enforce the command, they were chastized by the Vorderort counts, who accused them of using the cemetery (*Gottes Acker*) as if it were their own property. Nor did the counts accept the council's excuse that the command not to allow the funerals had come too late. They insisted that the Eisleben pastorate needed their support and this included enforcing the rule against burying Manichaeans. But the council had failed the clerics. Letter from Counts Hans Georg, Hans Albrecht, Hans Hoyer, and Bruno to the Eisleben city council, January 15, 1577. Andreaskirche Turmarchiv, Eisleben.

[45] Spangenberg described his mother's death and funeral as follows: "Aber weil sie ihren Sohn und rechte Lehre wider Gewissen nicht verbannen wollen, sind ihr nicht allein bei ihrem Leben in ihrer Schwachheit Absolution und Sacrament, sondern auch nach ihrem absterben die gewöhnlichen Ceremonien der Begräbniß versagt. Doch sind ihr bei 60 christlichen Personen von Mansfeld und Eisleben in Stille, sonderlich Graf Carlen des Aelteren Hofgesinde zu ihrem Ruhebettlin gefolget; welche aber darnach der Mentzel alle derentwegen in Bann getan und darzu gestattet, daß man

brother-in-law, Barthel Regener,[46] died. In a letter to the elector of Saxony's *Sequestration* representative in Eisleben, the Vorderort count, Hans Georg, complained that huge numbers of individuals had turned out for both funerals in defiance of the elector's command and that of the Eisleben pastorate. To make matters worse, continued the count, not only did ordinary people attended the funeral, but also the nobles (*Adel*) in great numbers.[47]

Deposed Mansfelder churchmen and lay adherents were also accused of establishing illegal schools. Unfortunately few details regarding them are available; only their existence is noted. In a report on the whereabouts and activities of those Mansfelder pastors who had been dismissed, the pastors Rauch and Hacus of the illegal church in Ziegelrode are also accused of "holding schools for the young boys."[48] In the case of the girls' school in Tal Mansfeld, the official church had a different problem on its hands. The teacher, Anna Wincke, was the widow of the Tal Mansfeld chaplain, Johann Wincke, a convinced Mansfelder and author of a catechism for children on the question of original sin. Although he died in 1574 before the invasion of Tal Mansfeld, Anna continued to instruct the girls in Mansfelder beliefs, for in 1577, the

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ihre Begräbnis mit hinwegreißen deren darneben gesetzten Gedächtnis violiert, und solches noch wohl getan geheißen." *Mansfeldische Chronica,* in *Mansfelder Blätter* 30 (1916): 295–296.

[46] Spangenberg described Regener's funeral as follows: "20 Februarii [1576] Barthel Regener, der Bergvogt zu Isleben, gestorben, welcher von Kind auf bei der Bergarbeit erzogen: ein Treckjunge, Berghauer, Schichtmeister, Geschworener, Bergrichter und Bergvogt gewesen und so bergverständig, als die Graven kaum einen gehabt, auch schwerlich wieder bekommen werden; aber doch ihn seines Ampts entsetzt, nur alleine um reiner lutherischer Bekentnis willen von der Erbsünde, und daß er seines Weibes Brüder, M. Cyriacum und Michaelem Spangenbergen nicht als Ketzer verdammen wollen, da er doch seines Bekenntnis guten und gewissen Grund gehabt und mit mehr denn siebenthalbhundert Zeugnissen der Schrift und Lutheri bewiesen, mit seiner eigen Hand geschrieben in ein Buch verfasset, auch so belesen in der Bibel und Lutheri Schriften gewesen, daß die islebischen Theologen (vor ihrem Abfall) sich selbst darüber verwundert und das Lob gegeben, daß ihnen seinesgleichen nicht vorkommen, wie er denn solches auch in einem Convivio und Gespräche wider Doctorn Jacobum Andream und dessen vorgehabte Amnestiam zu Isleben Anno 1569 in Beisein aller Prediger daselbst wohl bewiesen, die ihm doch nach seinem seligen Abschied die gewöhnlichen Ceremonien der Begräbnis nicht wollen widerfahren lassen." *Mansfeldische Chronica,* in *Mansfelder Blätter* 30 (1916): 295.

[47] Dresden, Loc. 9745/7, fol. 203v.

[48] "…welche beide knaben schule halten…." Dresden, Loc. 9742/18, fol. 2v. This report is neither signed nor dated, but must come from the period between Spangenberg's expulsion and 1580.

Vorderort count, Hans Hoyer, complained to the superintendent that nothing had been done to clean up the girls' school in Tal Mansfeld. Many efforts had been made, he admitted, but none seen through. "Now the weeds should be exterminated" and the wife of Johann Wincke should be ousted from her position, concluded the count.[49]

In 1578, further accusations appeared that the Mansfelders had set up illegal schools. The Vorderort count, Hans Georg, warned the administrator in Magdeburg that Anthonius Richter had rented a house in Tal Mansfeld where he installed the expelled pastor, Johann Rauch, along with his wife and children. The youth of the city were constantly coming and going, giving the house the appearance of a school. The whole place had become a meeting point for the heretics. A year later, evidence of underground schools can be found in the report of a Tal Mansfeld pastor to the superintendent. Describing the status of the official girls' school, the pastor notes that it is scarcely attended because most of the girls go to Anna Wincke, a Manichaean who attends neither church nor the Eucharist. Furthermore, many of the boys frequent the house of the "German-language secretary," Hans Matts, who, with his wife, is a Manichaean and refuses to attend church or the Eucharist.[50]

Finally, evidence exists that Spangenberg's and his colleagues' writings on original sin continued to be printed and distributed illegally in the territory after the invasion. Andreas Petri, one of two printers in Eisleben, is accused of being an open Manichaean and printing Manichaean literature.[51] Moreover, in June of 1575, the Vorderort counts charged a book binder[52] of spreading his wares on the church steps in Eisleben, including much forbidden literature. To make matters worse, they exclaimed, the Eisleben town council did nothing to

[49] "…soll nunn das unkraudt ausgerottet werden." Wernigerode MS Rep A 12 a III, No. 202. fol. 12r. It is unclear whether Anna Wincke lost her position as teacher, but in 1586 she complained before the consistory that she was not receiving her widow's allowance. The consistory responded that it was difficult to see their way clear to paying her after all the damage her husband had done during the controversy over original sin. Furthermore, they argued, prior to his death, her husband had been dismissed by the Vorderort counts for his heretical position and, therefore, they were under no obligation to pay her. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 10, fol. 186v.

[50] Nicolai, "Antwort auf die vorgelegten Fragen," 17.

[51] Dresden, Loc. 9742/18, fol. 2v. Unsigned and undated report.

[52] Probably Hans Helcken.

stop him.[53] In 1579, Jochem Flederwisch, another bookbinder and seller, was accused of selling Spangenberg's writings in Tal Mansfeld as well.[54] Clearly such information was available to those who desired it.

Resistance to the Eislebener successors of Spangenberg and his colleagues and efforts to maintain an underground church continued until November 8, 1581 when Georg Autumnus, dean in Tal Mansfeld, signed a contract with the Mansfelder laity. The agreement, no longer extant, had been negotiated by the Hinterort count, Carl the Elder, and the Mittelort count, Christoff, but it did not please Spangenberg, who called the effort well-meaning but misled.[55] It appears that with this contract, a level of reconciliation between the shadow and official church was reached, as the persecutions all but stopped. But much evidence exists that many Mansfelders did not give up their beliefs on original sin, some until the seventeenth century.[56]

This sketch of the Mansfelder laity and their actions begins to provide insight into the nature of this group. It reveals a close relationship between the Mansfelder clerics, their comital supporters, and the laity in general. It demonstrates that that laity was drawn from across the social, gender, age, and educational spectrum. Finally, it suggests a group that was deeply committed to its cause, willing to speak out and to suffer for its views if necessary. The reasons for this willingness are the subjects of the remaining chapters.

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[53] Letter from Counts Hans Georg, Hans Hoyer, and Bruno to Benno Pflugk, Electoral Saxony's representative, June 21, 1575. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 828, fol. 36v.

[54] Cyriakus Nicolai, "Antwort auf die vorgelegten Fragen", 18.

[55] Spangenberg, *Mansfeldische Chronica*, in *Mansfelder Blätter* 30 (1916): 92.

[56] On February 2, 1608, the Tal Mansfeld pastors Sebastian Ehrman and Johann Kegel wrote to the Eisleben consistory noting continued presence of a group of Mansfelders. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 831, fol. 22r.

CHAPTER SIX

EXTRA-DOCTRINAL FORCES AFFECTING THE LAITY

The previous analysis of the composition of the Mansfelder laity, the group ultimately deemed heretical in the controversy over original sin, demonstrated that they fell evenly across the social spectrum; it revealed that many were connected to local politics; it indicated that, in numerous cases, interpersonal relationships existed among them; it suggested that in their geographical distribution, most, but certainly not all, lived in and around Tal Mansfeld; it revealed that women not only were well represented, but that they played an important role in the controversy; and it hinted at a variety of other impersonal and non-belief-based forces nudging them in the direction of the Mansfelder position on original sin. This chapter isolates each of these stimuli and analyzes them in light of evidence from the implications of this group's actions, but much more significantly, it uses the wide variety and unique nature of the sources to allow the people to speak to these issues themselves. The result is a clearer understanding of the bundle of forces, some recognizable to the laity themselves, others not, influencing their actions during the controversy. A discussion of the role of doctrine and belief in this mix is reserved for chapter seven.

Splitting Skulls, not Splitting Hairs: Political Loyalties among the Mansfelder Laity

As noted above, a significant number of Mansfelder laity acted as advisors to the Hinterort counts or held political office in Tal Mansfeld. Of the sixty men whose professions are known, five were in the direct employ of these counts, while only one worked for the Vorderort counts. A further eleven Mansfelder laity held political office in Tal Mansfeld or in the mining district connected to it.[1] If we add the

[1] Among the regalia granted to certain princes and lords during the Middle Ages were the "mining regalia" (*Bergregal*). This was the right, within a certain district, to establish mining operations, to grant this authority to a third person, and to tax the mines. Along with the mining regalia, princes received the *Berggerichtsbarkeit*, the

seventeen city council members, all of whom were arrested and imprisoned in January 1575, twenty-nine individuals associated with the government in Tal Mansfeld sided with the Mansfelders, a number that strongly suggests political considerations as a motivating factor in the laity's reaction to the controversy. This conclusion aligns with the experiences of the counts themselves, another group of laymen for whom the two crises of the early 1570s, the *Sequestration* and the controversy over original sin, demonstrated clear overlap. The Mansfelder laity's actions in the months leading up to the invasion of Tal Mansfeld confirm this proposition.

A dearth of sources has made it difficult to know how the inhabitants of the territory reacted to the *Sequestration*, but occasional clues present themselves, among them an anonymous poem dated 1590, twenty years after the process of partitioning the territory had begun. The author presents a fictitious dialogue between a Mansfeld herald and a traveler who asks for news of the territory. The herald replies,

> I tell you the truth,
> That things are going very strangely with me,
> I have walked here and there,
> And traversed the Mansfeld lands,
> And where I was once well paid,
> So that I could live from my income,
> Which the counts willingly paid me,
> Now this income is a distant memory,
> For the elector has taken it,
> In a deed ill-befitting a Christian,
> And left the counts only beans.
> For this reason, he is a bad Christian.
> He is not to be praised,
> For he took all their magnificent goods by force.[2]

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right of jurisdiction over all court and judicial matters associated with the mines, their employees, and facilities. The counts of Mansfeld received the mining regalia from Charles IV in 1364. By the 1570s, a complex structure of political officials and judges had grown up who administered justice in the mining districts of the territory. Helmut Maenicke, "Die Mansfelder Berggerichte und ihre Zuständigkeit," *Mansfelder Blätter* 26 (1912), 52–84, here at 52.

[2] Ich bericht dich mit Warheit hier,
Da es gar selzam gehet mir,
Ich hab gelaufen hien und wieder,
In Mansfeldischen lands drin und druber,
Auch wohl ehe bekommen gutten lohn,
Das Ich Jetzt wohnt davon,
Es gebens die Herrn willig und gern,

The herald continues,

> It was not enough for the former and current elector,
> So the administrator also helped
> To take away all the cities and districts of my counts by force,
> As well as their houses and estates,
> And [the elector and the administrator] betrayed them,
> And pressured them, not only with words,
> But deceitfully forced them to be sequestered,
> With many disadvantageous contracts,
> So that they could do nothing to oppose it,
> Nor use their own income.…[3]

The poem continues for nine pages, recounting all of the ways in which the scurrilous, greedy, heartless administrator and elector had illegally and forcefully swallowed up the territory. Although the evidence from one poem cannot reliably encapsulate the general mood in the territory, it does suggest one local perspective on the imposition of the *Sequestration*, one distributed widely enough that a copy found its way into the elector's files. In short, there seems to have been some animosity among the people toward the feudal lords, even two decades after the *Sequestration*.

To this negative sentiment against the "foreign" rulers must be added positive feelings of loyalty toward various counts. As noted, with few exceptions the counts split over the question of original sin along

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So ist die einnahm von Ihn fern,
Die hat der Churfurst zu sich genomen,
Und den Graffen gelassen die bohnen,
Er hatts gethan wie ein böser Christ,
Deshalbe Er nicht zu loben ist,
Zu sich hat Er gezogen mit gewaltt,
All Ihr guth scheinlicher gestaldt.
Dresden, Loc. 9739/20, fol. 15v–16r.

[3] Es hat der altt und Jtzt Churfurst nicht gekohrn
Darzu der Administrator gantz verlohen,
Meiner Graffen Stedt und Empter,
Alle Heuser unnd guther,
Mit gewalt zu sich gezogen,
Und sie gahr darumb betrogen,
Entlich auch zu dem gedrungen,
und nichts redlich gezwungen,
Das sie heben mussen Sequestriren,
Und auch sich hart Reversiren,
Das sie sich nichts anmassen wollen,
Vielweniger Ihr einkomen brauchen sollen.…
Dresden, Loc. 9739/20, 16v–17r.

dynastic lines, a division that raises the question about the *Sequestration*'s effects on the laity, whether they too broke along the same lines on both issues and connected the two events with one another. The most obvious place to observe the inhabitants of Tal Mansfeld's response to the *Sequestration* is the clearest point of contact between subject and prince, the act of doing homage. Until the *Sequestration*, each dynastic line had received the oath of fealty from citizens in its share of the territory. When the Vorderort counts were sequestered, the citizens in their sections of the territory (excluding the cities) withdrew their homage and swore it directly to the sequestering princes. Although technically they had no choice, swearing the oath of fealty or refusing to do so was a means to demonstrate their approval or disapproval, their acceptance or rejection of the *Sequestration*. To all appearances, they swore loyalty to the new lords without delay.

But the situation in the three main cities, Eisleben, Tal Mansfeld, and Hettstedt, was different. Prior to the *Sequestration* they had been administered jointly, which meant that the citizens owed equal fealty to all three dynastic lines of counts. With the *Sequestration*, the cities were forced to withdraw their homage from the Vorderort counts and swear it to the new feudal lords, while maintaining their homage to the Mittelort and Hinterort counts. By summer of 1574, all citizens in the territory now under direct control of the sequestering lords had sworn allegiance to them[4] (including the cities of Eisleben and Hettstedt to the elector) except the citizens of Tal Mansfeld, who owed fealty to the administrator of the archdiocese of Magdeburg. Their negotiations with the administrator over this issue demonstrate that both sides saw the question of homage and the controversy over original sin as bound up together.[5]

On August 29, 1574, after the Vorderort counts had nudged the elector of Brandenburg into pressuring his son to take direct action against the Mansfelder clerics, the administrator sent his commissioner to Tal Mansfeld, where he ordered the sheriff (*Schultheiß*), the

[4] Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 2r.

[5] The following series of interactions during the autumn of 1574 has not been reported in any literature, nor have the efforts of Tal Mansfeld's citizenry to delay swearing fealty. The invasion of Mansfeld by 1,000 soldiers on September 8, 1574 has been noted, but interpreted only as an attempt to expel the pastors. See Meyer, *Die Flacianismus in der Grafschaft Mansfeld*, 53. In neither the modern literature nor the contemporary sources has any connection been made between the *Sequestration* and the controversy over original sin.

city council, and the citizens to gather in front of the city hall. The commissioner reminded those assembled that an *Act of Sequestration* had been concluded between the Vorderort counts and their feudal lords. As a result, the citizens of Eisleben had done homage to their new lord, the elector of Saxony, but the citizens of Tal Mansfeld had ignored requests to do the same to the administrator. Now the commissioner wanted to know "without a long-winded explanation" (*ohn einige weitleuffigkeit*) whether the citizens were willing to perform this obligation.

The irritation suggested by the formulation of this question was met with equal exasperation in the response of the sheriff, who indicated that this was not the first time the question had been asked and answered. Not only were the citizens of Tal Mansfeld well aware of the administrator's wish, he responded, but they were also certain that he knew their opinion on the matter. But the sheriff repeated it nonetheless: they could not transfer their entire homage to the administrator, for to do so would be to perjure themselves before the Hinterort counts, Volrad and Carl the Elder, as well as the one Vorderort count, Peter Ernst, who had protested the sequestration. In this context, perjury meant contradicting a direct order from the counts not to swear fealty to the administrator. The sheriff concluded that if the administrator could come to an agreement with these three counts, the citizens would gladly swear fealty.[6]

In response, the commissioner clarified that the homage due the administrator was only that which had previously been owed to the Vorderort counts, now sequestered. The other, non-sequestered counts, as well as Peter Ernst, were not included in the request. With this explanation in mind, the commissioner again asked if the inhabitants of Tal Mansfeld would swear fealty to the administrator. The citizens answered that they were not opposed to changing their homage from the Vorderort counts to the administrator, but they had been commanded not to. As simple people, this was a difficult business and to swear fealty to the administrator against the express command of their counts would injure their consciences. Again they requested that the administrator clarify the situation with the three counts in question, after which they would gladly adhere to the decision. But until this time, they could do no homage to the administrator—and that was their final answer.

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[6] This entire conversation is reported in Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, 1v–6v.

At this point, the conversation turned. The commissioner stated that he also had business with Cyriakus Spangenberg and the other pastors of Tal Mansfeld, who were called to the city hall in front of the people. The commissioner informed the pastors that the controversy over original sin was unnecessary and reminded them that their views had been censured by impartial theologians from outside the territory. Although the censures had been sent to the Hinterort counts, Volrad and Carl, along with the request that they put an end to the controversy, the result had been just the opposite. The dispute had spread beyond the borders of Mansfeld and Counts Volrad and Carl had set up a printing press in their castle (in direct opposition to the Saxon elector's prohibition of all printing regarding the issue of original sin) in order to continue producing polemical literature. Furthermore, the Vorderort counts had repeatedly requested that the administrator end the controversy, threatening to inform the elector of Saxony and the emperor of the situation should no action be taken. The administrator would not tolerate the pastors, whom he considered Manichaeans and false teachers. Spangenberg and his colleagues must cease their heretical teachings immediately or be driven from their posts. The commissioner then requested that the pastors reply in writing as to their intentions, departing with a threat: if the council and citizens imposed the terms of his request on the pastors, things would go well. If not, others would come in his stead to address the situation.

There is no evidence that the citizens made any attempt to settle the question of homage with Counts Volrad, Carl, and Peter Ernst, nor that the pastors wrote to the administrator with their answer. In either case, the administrator sent his own response in the form of one thousand horsemen and foot soldiers,[7] who arrived in Tal Mansfeld on September 8, 1574, a show of force that was a precursor to the invasion of city on New Years' Eve, 1574. Prior to their arrival, however, Spangenberg, one of the city's sheriffs (there were two), and the city secretary (*Stadtschreiber*) fled, along with a number of council members and other citizens. When the soldiers failed to find these men, they ordered the remaining council members and citizens to assemble in front of the city hall, where the commissioner reminded them that the administrator had requested homage more than three and a half

[7] This number may well be inflated as a force of this size would have been completely unnecessary to accomplish the task at hand.

years prior and repeatedly since then. Furthermore he had come to Tal Mansfeld only days earlier with another reminder of the administrator's command. "Therefore," he concluded, "his princely grace has dispatched us one more time. He wishes you to answer briefly whether you will [swear fealty] or not. If not, we have another command that we will carry out."[8]

At this point the assembled citizens had no choice. Admitting that they were aware of the administrator's requests, they claimed that they would gladly have been obedient had they not been forbidden by Volrad, Carl, and Peter Ernst. "But," they continued, "we must observe and consider the situation and predicament, that these same lords of ours are not in the territory and so we have no protection against your grace. We are surrounded by force and, therefore, are compelled to do this."[9] They swore fealty, but also raised a formal protest.

When the commissioner had received their oath, he turned his attention to the pastors and the controversy over original sin. He had been instructed by his lord to remind the city council (members of which had just sworn allegiance to the administrator) that Spangenberg and his colleagues had brought heresy into the territory with their teachings on original sin. Therefore it was the will of the administrator that they be expelled from the territory. The sheriff answered, "With regard to the pastors who have been among us for a long time in their pastoral office, we have found that they preach and demonstrate to us nothing other than God's Word, according to Luther's writings, purely and clearly."[10] Furthermore, he continued, the pastors were willing to defend their teachings in a synod or colloquium. If, in such a forum, their errors could be demonstrated from God's Word and Luther's writings, the citizens of Tal Mansfeld would expel them immediately. But because this was a question of conscience, the sheriff asked the

[8] "Derhalben haben unß s. f. g. abermal abgefertigett, wollet euch derhalben kuertzlich ercleren ob Ihrs nach thun wolt oder nicht, dan wo nicht, so haben wir einen andernn bevhelich." Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 10r.

[9] "So muessen wir doch ansehen und bedenken den zustandt und gelegenheit, das dieselbige unsere gnedige Hernn, nicht Innerhalb des Landes, also das wir uns keines schutzes von Ihren gnaden befinden, das wir mit gewalte umbgeben und hierzu gezwungen, so mussen wir solchs gotte bevhelen." Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 11r.

[10] "Was die predicanten anlangst, welchen uns nun ein lange Zeit alheir mit dem predig ampt vorsehen, Befinden wir nicht anders den das sie uns Gottes Wortt, nach Doctor Lutheri Schriften, rein und clar predigen und vorbringen." Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, 15r.

administrator not to force them to make this decision.[11] With that the commissioner and soldiers withdrew.

The next day, September 9, two documents were produced in response to this conversation. First, the Tal Mansfeld city council and citizenry wrote to the administrator defending the teachings of the city's pastorate:

> That some now speak about [Spangenberg] so is merely a result of the fact that he preaches according to the Scripture and the books of Luther, just as the late Mr. Michael Coelius did before him—namely that the natural man is, in and of himself, without Christ and without rebirth and the grace of God, before the judgment seat of God and according to the judgment of the law (which includes everything as sin, worthless, entirely corrupt, an abomination, sinful, worthy of death, shut out from the kingdom of God) damned to hell. Luther says this repeatedly and the Schmalkald Articles clearly state likewise. This and other similar formulations in which the natural man has no righteousness or goodness before God and must rely solely upon Jesus Christ, our only intercessor, have gotten Spangenberg into trouble.[12]

The council again requested that a colloquium be held to give their pastors the opportunity to defend themselves. In the meantime, asserted the city fathers, the opinions of those who hear their pastors daily should be given more weight than the accusers, who have never heard them preach.

The second document produced on September 9, a citation from the administrator to those citizens who had fled to avoid swearing fealty, was found nailed to the door of the Tal Mansfeld *Ratskeller*. The administrator reminded the citizens of his repeated requests that they

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[11] "Vor das aber, weil solches sachen, die unser seelen heil und seligkeit betreffen thut, wollen wir s. f. g. um Gottes willen underthenigst gebethen haben, das unss s. f. g. hiermit nicht bedruebt und mit solcher anmuthung, unsere Seelen und gewissen beschweren." Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, 15v.

[12] "Das Ihme aber ettlichen reden so hoch angezogen werden, kompt nirgendt anders her, den das er nach lautt der heiligen Schrifft und der buecher Lutheri gleich wie auch fuer Ihm, Herr Michael Coelii, seliger gethan, lerett, das der Naturliche Mensch an Ihm selbst, ausser christo, und ohne die widergeburth und gnade Gottes fuer Gottes Richtstul, nach des Gesetzes urtheill, welchs alles unter die Suende schleist, nicht tuege, gantz verderbett, aller ding ein grewel, Sunde, des Todes schuldig, vom Reiche Gottes ausgeschlossen, und zur Hellen verdampt sey, wie solchs Doctor Luther allenthalben treibett, und die Schmalkaldischen Artickel auch clar besagen. Diese und dergleichen rede, damitt dem Natuerlichen menschen fuer Gott alle Gerechtigkeitt und Guttes genommen und Christo Jehsu unserem Einigen Mittler, alles zugeschrieben wirtt, werden Ihme von seinen mißguenstigen, so trefflich uebel gedeuttet und verkerett." Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 12r–13v.

do homage in order to "finish the work of the *Sequestration*." Because the citizens had delayed so often, he had now been forced to send his troops to compel the oath of fealty, but many had fled to avoid it. If they did not appear before city hall on September 13, their goods and belongings would be forfeit.[13]

On the appointed day, the administrator's men were in no mood for resistance. The commissioner explained that he was not interested in those individuals who had already sworn fealty, but in those who had avoided it. "If they now would do homage and their duty on account of the sequestered counts like the other obedient cities had done, then they should demonstrate this. If not, [we] have other orders."[14] With that the oath of fealty was read, but unlike that of September 9, this one included the transfer of homage from the Vorderort count, Peter Ernst, who was in the process of protesting the *Sequestration*. This led the city secretary to ask if there was some mistake. "Secretary," replied the commissioner, "are you alone so incredibly intelligent? Didn't you hear that all the sequestered counts are meant? Did the devil make you alone so smart?"[15] The secretary explained that he was not attempting to be difficult, but that the administrator had employed force from the very beginning of these negotiations. Soldiers had ransacked his house, scared his son out of his wits, so that he crawled into a haystack where he had almost been impaled by the soldiers. In addition, continued the city secretary, they had destroyed many of the sheriff's possessions, even though the council had repeatedly stated that they did not intend any disobedience toward the administrator. "If it were so that this was just a question of homage," he continued, "we never would have stayed away."[16] He ended his speech noting that they were willing to swear fealty, but under protest on account of the commands of Peter Ernst, Volrad, and Carl, who forbade them to do homage. With great anger the commissioner responded,

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[13] Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 20v.

[14] "Do nun dieselben gleichsam den anderen gehorsamen Stadten Ihre Huldung und pflicht wegen der Sequestrierenden Graffen, thun wolten, mochten sie es anzeigen. Wo nicht, hetten sie ein anderenn bevhelich." Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 22v.

[15] "Stadtschreiber, seid Ihr dan alleine so Rasenweise? Hoeret Ihr nicht das die Sequestrierden Graffen gemeint sein? Hat euch den der Teufel allein so klug gemacht?" Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 23r.

[16] "Do wir es auch, das es nhur umb die Huldung zuthun gewesen where, bedachte hetten, wolten wir nicht von der gemeine gewichen sein." Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 23v.

> Secretary, did you just become so smart this summer? My prince and lord is fully aware that you are an agitator who has riled the city council and citizenry against doing homage and misled them. And you should know that my most gracious prince and lord will not allow such an affront to go unpunished. We will report to his Grace your continued agitation and reserve the right of punishment.[17]

The administrator had waited two years on account of Peter Ernst's protestations, exclaimed the commissioner, even though it was clear that the count was only delaying the inevitable.

> When, on this account, your head is split in two and one part is taken in one direction and the other in another, and there is no security anywhere, how will your protestation help you? Now listen closely to what I have to say. If you will do homage, say so. If not, say so. In that case I have orders as to how things should proceed.[18]

The citizens did homage, after which the city council was led away for a private discussion with the commissioner regarding the Mansfelder clergy. Because they had now sworn the oath of fealty, said the commissioner, they were duty-bound to obey their new lord, and expel the leaders of the Manichaean sect by giving them their walking staffs and showing them the border. If they failed, they themselves would be the authors of the consequences. A notice of this command was placed in "the usual location," probably the door of the city hall.[19]

On September 15, the city council and citizenry of Tal Mansfeld wrote to the administrator, again insisting upon the innocence of their pastors, outlining the Mansfelder clerics' position on original sin, and asserting its biblical precedent. They repeated their request that a colloquium be organized to decide the matter and noted that they could not obey the administrator in this question of conscience, but would gladly conform to him in all temporal affairs.[20] Between

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[17] "Stadtschreiber, habt Ihr den diesen sommer allein so einen klugen kopff bekommen? Mein G. furst und Herr Ist gar wol berichtet, das Ir ein Meidtmacher seindt, der bis daher Radt und gemeine die Huldung verhetzett und vorfhuerett hatt. Und Ihr solt wissen, das mein gnedigster Fuerst und Herr, solchs an Ihn nicht wirtt ungestraffen lassen. Wir wollen auch s. f. g. Eures Meidmachens ferner berichten und die straffe vorbehalten haben." Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 24v–25r.

[18] "Wan euch darüber die Koepff entzwey geschlagen, Einer hie der andern dort hinweg gefuertt und nirgent sicher sein wuerde, was where euch mit Irem protestiren beholffen, Ihr hoerett wil, was man euch sagett, woltt Ihre hulden, so sagetts, wo nicht so sagetts auch. So haben wir bevhelich, was wir unß weitter verhalten sollen." Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 25r–v.

[19] Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 26r–27v.

[20] Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 27v–30v.

mid-September and December the standoff hit a lull, a calm before the storm. But on December 8, 1574, the commissioner again arrived in Tal Mansfeld where the scene was replayed. The commissioner reminded the citizens how disobedient they had been in the matter of homage and commanded them to expel the Mansfelder clergy sullied by Manichaeism.[21] The city council's response was likewise to repeat itself: they had not been disobedient to the administrator on the issue of homage; and their pastors taught according to the Word of God, the prophets and apostles, and Luther's writings. Until this was proven false, they could not in good conscience dismiss their pastors.[22] Finally, they reminded the commissioner that Counts Ernst, Christoff, Volrad, and Carl held *ius patronatus* for the offices of Spangenberg and his colleagues. To dismiss these pastors would be to go against their oath and duty to these counts. With that the commissioner departed. The next time the city council and citizens of Tal Mansfeld had contact with him he was leading them captive on January 4, 1575, after the city had been invaded by five hundred soldiers.[23] Spangenberg and his colleagues had fled the city, most never to return.

Although one could argue that at the beginning of this series of encounters between the city council and citizens of Tal Mansfeld on the one side, and the commissioner and the administrator on the other, the issues of fealty and the dismissal of the pastors were separate, they certainly grew together during the course of the negotiations. On August 29, the commissioner addressed the citizens regarding homage, then asked the pastors about the controversy over original sin—albeit in front of the laity. When on September 8 the soldiers arrived and forced members of the city council and citizens to swear fealty against their will, the dismissal of the pastors became the first official command of the administrator to his new subjects. Although they could not resist his orders to swear fealty, they did refuse to expel their pastors rather than act upon an oath of homage taken under duress. The same situation occurred on September 13, when those who had avoided swearing fealty on September 9 were forced, upon threat of losing all their belongings, to do homage. Immediately thereafter they

[21] Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 35v–36v.
[22] Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 37r–v.
[23] Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 60v. Another report, written by advisors to the Hinterort counts, places this number at 800. Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 57v.

were commanded, as new subjects of the administrator, to dismiss their pastors. Again they refused.

The two issues, homage and expulsion of the pastors, can be seen as two steps in the administrator's assertion of authority over the citizens of Tal Mansfeld. They in turn sought to resist this new authority. Their only means of doing so was first to avoid swearing fealty until there was no other choice; then to refuse to carry out the administrator's commands, in this case, to expel their pastors. The dynamics of this power relationship certainly played a role in the citizenry of Tal Mansfeld's decision on whether or not to side with the Mansfelder clerics.

It is also clear that the political loyalties of the citizenry lay squarely with the Hinterort counts, and perhaps also to some degree with Peter Ernst, the Vorderort opponent of the *Sequestration*. The citizens' excuse, used repeatedly and in the face of a growing threat, was that they could not contradict the orders of these counts and swear fealty. Furthermore, on December 8, the city council and citizens refused to expel their pastors because the counts had *ius patronatus* over the offices of the churchmen. In this matter also the citizens demonstrated that their loyalties lay with the counts.

Because their political fidelity so obviously tended in this direction, it is reasonable to ask whether such devotion also influenced their religious allegiances. There is no evidence that the counts commanded the citizenry not to dismiss the pastors, as they had ordered the people not to swear fealty to the administrator. But by late 1574, it was no secret that Volrad and Carl were Spangenberg's chief supporters and protectors.[24] It is probable that the citizens of Tal Mansfeld, dedicated to these counts in other ways, would also tend toward Volrad and Carl's views on religion. The statistical evidence further supports this view. Of the city council members imprisoned in January 1575, between one quarter and one third never appear again as supporters of Spangenberg, suggesting either that their reasons for supporting him had little to do with religious conviction, or that they were unwilling to suffer the consequences of their beliefs.

With regard to the advisors and employees of the Hinterort counts, Ludwig Gleißenberg, Balten Metzler, Timotheus Schaller, Alexander Spiessen, Hans Happach, and Anthonius Richter, political and religious motivations merged. These individuals formed the basis of lay

[24] See chapter four, "The Counts and the Controversy."

support for the Mansfelder clergy and were among those who worked the hardest to establish a shadow church, who held out the longest, and who suffered for it the most. As a result, the administrator's agents singled out Metzler, Schaller, and Happach as ringleaders. Richter's case alone occupied the attention of the pastors, the consistory, the Vorderort counts, electoral Saxony's representative in Eisleben, the elector himself, and the administrator in Magdeburg. As opponents of the *Sequestration* and supporters of the Mansfelder clerics, the Hinterort counts undoubtedly influenced their advisors' position on the question of original sin, and it seems likely that these men were acting, at least in part, on orders from their lords when they defended the adherents of the Mansfelder clerics, or opposed the new pastors in Tal Mansfeld installed against the *ius patronatus* of the Hinterort counts. This suspicion is confirmed in the disputation on original sin that took place five years later in 1580, pitting Schaller and his companions against Autumnus, the Eislebener successor to Spangenberg as pastor and dean in Tal Mansfeld.[25] There the laymen's first response was to declare that Spangenberg was still their lawful pastor. Autumnus reports,

> They remained committed and held fast to this position. When we [Autumnus and colleagues] explained our stance, they protested loudly against our calls [to the ministry in Mansfeld]. Those [individuals] in the service [of the Hinterort counts—Schaller et al.] objected because it would be against their duties if they should accept us as their proper pastors, for their high-born, merciful lords, who were just as much counts of Mansfeld as the other lords, have not called the new pastors. That was done by the other counts. Nor have [the Hinterort counts] consented to the installation of these men.[26]

Thus their actions must be viewed in the context of power relations. For the laity of Tal Mansfeld, supporting the Mansfelders meant opposing the Vorderort counts, the sequestering princes, and the

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[25] For a more thorough discussion of this event, see chapter seven, "Lay Understandings of Original Sin and Lutheran Theology," esp. [263–270].

[26] "Solcher auflage sind sie auch gestendig gewesen und bleiben und haben zu mehrer erklerung wieder unsern beruff lauter protestirt. Die so Herrn Diener sein, wollen auß dem Grunde das es wieder Ihre Pflichte wehre, wenn sie unß fur Ihre ordentliche Seelsorger erkennen solten, Aldieweil die auch wolgebornen Ihre gnediger Herrnn, Welche sowoll, als die andernn Herrn, Graffen zu Mansfeldt wehrenn, mich und meine Collegas neben den andernn Graffen nicht zugliche beruffen, auch in unsern beruff gar nicht consentirtt hatten, Sondern M. Spangenbergen noch fur einen ordentlichen Pfarhernn diß ortts erkennten." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 834, fol. 9r.

territory's official church, itself under the control and protection of these lords.

This political component of the controversy over original sin is demonstrated again in the manner in which resistance to the new pastors in Tal Mansfeld was finally brought to an end. A rapprochement occurred only in 1581 when the Hinterort count, Carl, and the Mittelort count, Christoff, brokered an agreement. After that, evidence of continued efforts to establish a shadow church drops off dramatically. There were still individuals who ran into problems because of their position on original sin (Metzler, for example, was expelled from the territory in 1583), but the vast majority of the citizens appears to have returned to the official church. The point is that in most cases, the conflict between the Tal Mansfeld pastorate (now all Eislebeners) and the Mansfelder laity did not end with the actions of theologians or the consistory, but rather with what appears to have been a political solution. For this reason, one must conclude that political considerations and loyalties heavily influenced the laity's decisions regarding which side they took in the controversy over original sin. Unfortunately, direct evidence does not exist that would demonstrate how far down the social ladder such considerations extended, but it stands to reason that the broader body of citizens of Tal Mansfeld (not just those in political positions), all of whom were forced to acknowledge the sequestration by swearing fealty to new lords, were also aware of and influenced by the political situation.

But challenging the conclusion that the laity's protests were entirely politically motivated is the fact that every time the administrator demanded that the citizens of Tal Mansfeld dismiss their pastors, the people's first response was always to defend the doctrinal position of their churchmen. Again and again they explained the Mansfelder understanding of original sin, insisted that it was biblical and conformed with Luther's teachings, and claimed that because they heard Spangenberg daily, they were in the best position to judge his orthodoxy. Only once did the citizens grasp for a legal response, namely that they could not oppose their counts' *ius patronatus*. Their chief argument was the theological orthodoxy of the Mansfelder position.

Ties of Family and Friendship

But political considerations were not the only forces pushing the citizens of Tal Mansfeld and the surrounding area in the direction of

the Mansfelders. A variety of forms of social networks also played an important role. With a population of around 2,500 during the sixteenth century, the inhabitants of Tal Mansfeld conducted business, married, socialized, and fought with one another. Even from the limited prosopographical information available, there are clear indications that personal connections were a significant factor in many of the laity's decision-making processes during the controversy over original sin.

In some cases, families simply banded together, taking the same side in the debate, as exemplified by the counts of the various dynastic lines. The most elemental form of this alliance was in the smallest iteration of family unit, the married couple. In thirty-two cases when the husband was charged with "Manichaean beliefs," the accuser stated explicitly, "and his wife." But often members of the extended family also joined in, as the example of the Spangenberg family—admittedly somewhat exceptional—indicates. With Cyriakus in the lead, the family put forth a common front. Spangenberg's brother, Michael, a pastor in the town of Volkstedt, became one of the dean's chief supporters.[27] When on March 17, 1575 the Vorderort counts dismissed Michael for Manichaeism, he went to Eisleben, where he teamed-up with the layman, Anthonius Richter, to drum up support for his brother's position on original sin.[28] There he held out until 1577, when he was expelled from Mansfeld and the lands of the archdiocese of Magdeburg for holding conventicles and openly campaigning for his brother's position. After his expulsion, he followed Cyriakus to Schlitz in Hesse, later finding a position with the counts of Stolberg. Cyriakus's mother, also among his staunchest supporters, was denied a public funeral due to her adherence to her son's teachings. The new dean, Autumnus, cited Cyriakus's sister-in-law, Margaretha, to appear before him and chastised her for having had business dealings with Timotheus Schaller, a well-known adherent of the "Manichaean enthusiasm."[29] Likewise Cyriakus's sister, Agathe Regener, was refused traditional funeral ceremonies for her adherence to her brother's teachings on original

[27] Cyriakus appears to have been something of a patron for his brother, at one point requesting that either Count Hans Georg or one of his brothers attend Michael's investiture as a pastor. Spangenberg to Count Hans Georg, September 28, 1569. Rembe, ed., *Der Briefwechsel des M. Cyricaus Spangenberg*, 1: 117.

[28] Spangenberg, *Mansfeldische Chronica,* in *Mansfelder Blätter* 30 (1916): 177.

[29] Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 39v. This was during a period in which the administrator in Magdeburg had forced the "Manichaeans" to close their shops and forbidden all business dealings with them. Margaretha's summons was in response to her disregard for this prohibition.

sin.[30] Agathe's husband, Barthel Regener, a major figure in the territory's mining industry, openly supported his brother-in-law and as a result was also denied traditional funeral rites.[31] Due to her adherence to her father's teachings on original sin, Autumnus denied Cyriakus's daughter godparentship of Paul Markarrt's child.[32] Cyriakus's son married Greta Stöckel (Dreyling), a woman who, in 1579, was expelled from all lands under control of the administrator in Magdeburg for her resolute support of Spangenberg.[33] Her father, Christoff Stöckel, wrote a six-folio confession in support of Cyriakus's position on original sin and was a life-long Mansfelder supporter.[34] These ten individuals from three cities were related to Spangenberg by blood or through marriage, and it is likely that this number only scratches the surface of the Spangenberg connections.

To a lesser extent, the same phenomenon reveals itself among families like Martin Luther's in Tal Mansfeld. Of Luther's relatives there, Cyriakus Kauffmann and Veit Luder, nephews of the Reformer, took the Mansfelder position. In addition, a miner named Lorenz Luder as well as Johan and Kilian Kauffmann who may well have been relatives of the Reformer were also implicated in Tal Mansfeld as followers of the Mansfelders. Another family, the Eisleben-based Drachstedt brothers, Hans and Philip, were also accused of being Manichaeans. Hans, a lawyer, clearly had personal connections to other individuals in Eisleben who shared his opinions on original sin.[35]

But familial ties did not bind every member to the cause. The eldest Drachstedt brother Barthel, also a lawyer, was in the service of the nearby counts of Schwarzburg during the early 1570s. After the

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[30] Spangenberg, *Mansfeldische Chronica*, in *Mansfelder Blätter* 31 (1917): 296.

[31] Spangenberg, *Mansfeldische Chronica*, in *Mansfelder Blätter* 31 (1917): 295.

[32] Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 831, fol. 1v ff.

[33] A report from 1579 in which the hearing of the two female Mansfelders is recorded recounts Dreyling's expulsion: "Ihrer zwo wollten sich gar nicht unterrichten lassen, sondern bestunden stracks darauf, daß Spangenbergk nicht unrecht gelehrt hette, unter welchen die eine Greta Stöckels oder Dreylings, die andere Davidt Rörers Weib gewesen. Sagten auch darneben, sie weren die Sünde selbst. Denen haben die fürstlichen Commissarri befohlen, daß sie innerhalb vier Wochen nicht allein die Herrschaft Mansfeld, sondern auch das ganze Erzstift reumen sollten." Protocol for the 1579 Visitation of Tal Mansfeld, *Mansfelder Blätter* 19 (1905), 24–27, here at 27.

[34] Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 91v–98v.

[35] During Drachstedt's negotiations for re-entry into the official church in 1595, Christoff Stöckel and Hans Helcken played the role of middlemen between Drachstedt and the consistory. Both men were convinced Mansfelders. See, Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 146v–171v and 194v–197v.

invasion of Tal Mansfeld, he came to work for the Vorderort count, Bruno, during a period in which the Vorderort counts were pressuring Barthel's brother, Hans, to return to the official church. Barthel left no evidence that he in any way supported the Mansfelder position, nor does Spangenberg mention him when recounting in his introduction to *Theander Lutherus* the great deeds of the Drachstedt family in the service of the true religion, a fact that suggests that Barthel took no side in the debate, or he sided with the Eislebeners.[36] Moreover, Andreas Sachse's son played a major role in convincing his father to retract his support for the Mansfelders. When communications became strained between the elder Sachse and the dean in Tal Mansfeld, the son (also Andreas) acted as mediator. But a week after the new dean and the elder Sachse had reached an agreement, Sachse having signed a statement condemning the Mansfelder position and reconciling himself with the church, he recanted insisting that he had signed only to please his son.[37] Matthias Breyther, a Tal Mansfeld council member, originally took the Mansfelder side in the dispute, then watched his brother,[38] M. Zacharias Praetorius (Breyther), pastor in Eisleben and adherent of the Mansfelder position, first waver, then eventually switch sides in the debate.[39] It is unclear whether Matthias also had a change of heart. Thus, familial ties did not always dictate one's position in the controversy.

Beyond the family, ties of friendship also played a role in the decision-making process of the laity. Paul Marckarrt chose Balten Metzler's wife, Cyriakus Spangenberg's daughter, and Bastian Winterstein as godparents for his child. The presiding Eislebener pastor insisted on examining each one with regard to his or her position on original sin before allowing them to stand at the baptismal font. Winterstein passed the test, but Metzler's wife and Spangenberg's daughter failed. Describing the scene, the pastor wrote, "Then Winterstein answered

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[36] In 1589, Spangenberg dedicated his *Theander Lutherus* to Hans Drachstedt, referring to him there as 'his *Schwager*' (either good friend or brother-in-law). Spangenberg also mentioned Drachstedt's brother, Philip, another supporter of the Mansfelders. Finally the dean recounted some of the heroic deeds of the Drachstedt family members during the early Reformation in Mansfeld, implying that the current trials and tribulations of the Drachstedt brothers were but an extension of those their forefathers were forced to endure. Spangenberg, *Theander Lutherus*, Introduction, XXII.

[37] Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 62v–63r.

[38] Hoppenrodt and Titius, *Chronik der Stadt Eisleben*, fol. 94r.

[39] Spangenberg, *Mansfeldische Chronica*, in *Mansfelder Blätter* 30 (1916): 87.

that if the other two godparents were disqualified, he did not want to be one either."[40] It appears that Winterstein's loyalties to the other two chosen godparents were more important to him than his position on original sin.

Moreover, Marckarrt, himself a staunch supporter of the Mansfelders, picked individuals who were like-minded (with the possible exception of Winterstein) to be the godparents of his children, a scenario that occurred with some frequency. Anthonius Richter was twice refused godparentship, once for the child of Benedict Hoffmann and again for the child of the expelled pastor, Chilianus Venatorius, for whom the other godfather, Hans Schwemen, was also refused. Both godparents were committed supporters of the Mansfelders. Hans von Koburg, one of the Tal Mansfeld city council members held captive during January of 1575, was accused of threatening his pastor because the man had refused von Koburg's choice of the godparents of his child.[41] For many individuals, where one stood on the question of original sin appears to have been an important factor in social associations. Adherents of the Mansfelders stuck together.

On the other hand, even in a fairly small, close-knit community like Tal Mansfeld there seems to have been real differences of opinion regarding the Mansfelder teachings. In March 1579, in the midst of a concerted offensive against the Mansfelder laity there, the administrator in Magdeburg inexplicably acquiesced and allowed those imprisoned for "Manichaeism" to go free. As a result, some of the Mansfelder clerics and laity who had been expelled from the territory returned to Tal Mansfeld, while Mansfelder citizens who had had their businesses forcibly closed, reopened them. Of this decision, an Eislebener pastor in Tal Mansfeld wrote,

> And there was a cry among the folk as if the lord commissioner [representative of the administrator in Magdeburg] had gone too far, and the Manichaeans would now be left entirely alone. So that these people, who had faithfully remained in church and come to the sacrament, acted as if they would now fall away. And some let it be known that if they had not received the sacrament earlier, they would certainly not receive it now. And as a sign, I did not have one single communicant on the feast

[40] "Da hatt der Winterstein geantwortete, das wo die ander zwo Gevatter nicht solten bey der Tauffe sein und bleiben, so woltt er auch nicht stehen." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 831, fol. 3r.

[41] Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 831, fol. 2v.

> of the *conceptionis Christi*, a situation that I have never experienced as long as I have been in Tal Mansfeld. And [the Manichaeans] came into such regard that it was as though everyone wanted to split into factions again, and the most recent trouble became even more annoying that the original one.[42]

The complicated mixture of emotions and social relationships exhibited in this paragraph demands close attention. Step one: in the middle of a concerted persecution of the followers of Spangenberg (which included expulsions, imprisonments, and the closure of the Mansfelder laity's shops), the administrator reversed course, giving them amnesty. Step two: a cry went up from among the folk presumably anti-Mansfelder in their views because they believed that the administrator "had gone too far," in that he would now leave the Manichaeans alone and presumably no longer prosecute them. Step three: those who had been coming to church and the sacrament (the same folk who sent up the cry), seemingly began to fall away (or acted as if they would fall away). Step four: these individuals made it clear that had they refused the sacrament earlier (presumably like the adherents of Mansfelders and in defiance of the new pastors), they would certainly not start receiving it now. Or put another way, the administrator's amnesty would in no way compel those lay adherents of the Mansfelders to return to the church. Step five: these individuals boycotted the Eucharist (a strategy for which the Mansfelder laity were well known) to demonstrate their displeasure with the administrator's new lax policy. Step six: the pastor writing the report indicates that the administrator's actions made the situation worse. This episode demonstrates how the population of Tal Mansfeld was itself split on the controversy, and illustrates the depth of emotion on both sides of the debate. Opponents of the Mansfelders could also let their voice be heard, in this case demonstrating their displeasure with their feet. Thus it would be false to see the entire

[42] "…und kam ein Geschrey unter das Volk, als hetten die Herren Commissarien der Sachen zuviel getan, und man würde die Manichäer hinfort wohl zufrieden lassen, daß als das Volk, so sich zuvor fleißig zur Kirchen und Sakrament gehalten, augenscheinlich wieder abzufallen anhub, und daß sich etliche hören ließen, wann sie das Sacrament nicht empfangen hätten, so wollten sie es numehr nicht empfahen. Zum Wahrzeichen hatte ich auf das hohe Fest conceptionis Christi nicht einen einzigen Communicanten, welches mir doch nicht widerfahren, weil ich im Tal gewesen. Und gewann in summa ein solch Anseen, als wollte es alles wieder in Haufen fallen und das Letzte erger werden denn das Erste." Nicolai, "Historischer und summarischer Bericht," 32–33.

community of Tal Mansfeld as somehow compelled by social connections into supporting the Mansfelder cause. Opinions differed, even in this small city.

"He was a learned man, one who did good deeds for the poor people": Devotion to One's Own Pastor

It has been argued that during the course of the sixteenth century an increasing distance developed between Protestant pastors and their parishioners. Luther's desacralization of the priesthood, which included allowing churchmen to marry, had only a temporary effect of integrating pastors into their communities. Shortly thereafter a new class of clerics formed, recruited primarily from among the sons of clergy or from a variety of social and professional groups with ties to the urban magistracy and well-to-do artisans, but almost never from the peasantry. Differences in social standing, status as a minister of the state and church, education and Latinity as opposed to German-speaking culture, and often higher earnings separated the pastor from his parishioners. Furthermore, pastors in rural areas often came from the city, brought a wife along or married from outside the community (most often his children married outside the community as well), and never owned land or joined a guild, exacerbating the perception among parishioners that he was an outsider.[43] These factors are said to have caused a rift that ranged from the simple absence of social ties to outright hostility between pastors and parishioners.[44]

Nonetheless, in the case of the controversy over original sin in Mansfeld, loyalty to one's own pastor (and conversely, animosity toward those Eislebener pastors installed after the invasion of Tal Mansfeld) appears to have played a significant role in parishioners' decisions to side with their pastors. In ninety-four percent of all cases

[43] Tolley, *Pastors and Parishioners in Württemberg*. See especially chapter 1.

[44] Perhaps another cause must be added to this list, namely the brevity of the pastors' service to a congregation. Due to illness, death, and, especially during this period, frequent expulsion from their posts, clerics often did not serve a congregation very long. *Cuius regio, euius religio* meant that whole generations of pastors potentially lost their postions at the ascension of a new prince to his father's throne. In 1574, during the strike against the crypto-Calvinists, 111 pastors were dismissed in Electoral Saxony. Seven years earlier, in the Synergism controversy, 40 pastors in Thuringia lost their positions, many of whom came to Mansfeld only to lose their jobs again along with approximately 30 colleagues.

where a member of the laity was cited by the territorial church for Manichaeism, his or her pastor had been expelled for the same reason. While such figures alone do not necessarily confirm the presence of loyalty to one's pastor, the sources indicate that such devotion existed on three levels.

The first, doctrinal allegiance, will be addressed fully in chapter seven. But on the whole, parishioners believed the theological positions presented by their own pastors, as exemplified by the Tal Mansfeld city council's defense of Spangenberg and his cohorts during negotiations with the Magdeburg administrator in late 1574. After the invasion of Tal Mansfeld, the citizens articulated their impressions of their new pastors by refusing to attend services (especially the Eucharist) administered by these "interlopers." When possible, adherents of the Mansfelder clerics continued to go to their old pastors, whether this meant establishing conventicles, making trips outside the territory, or traveling to a safe haven like Count Carl's church or Ziegelrode.

The second level of parishioner devotion to the Mansfelder clergy was in the form of interpersonal relations, as demonstrated by the example of Spangenberg himself.[45] Quite simply the parishioners liked the dean and his family. It is true that no flowery and sentimental lay assessments of their expelled pastors appear in the sources. But in retrospect, in any case, it seems that Spangenberg was considered a friend of the commoners. In 1608, twelve years after the last known case of "Manichaeism" was brought before the consistory, the issue of heresy was raised again in Tal Mansfeld, this time by a recently appointed pastor. It was during a time of pestilence and due to the nature of the plague, it killed many children. The new pastor, apparently a fire-and-brimstone preacher, insisted that the youngsters of Tal Mansfeld were dying because of God's wrath against the city's inhabitants due to their continued Manichaeism. The pastor's two colleagues in Tal Mansfeld were mortified that the newly appointed minister would raise the issue of original sin again, a sentiment that they voiced to the superintendent in Eisleben in the same letter in which they requested that the superintendent restrain the new appointee. There are indeed some people here in Tal Mansfeld, they stated,

[45] Unfortunately the evidence for social attachment to one's pastor revolves mainly around the person of Spangenberg, and he is clearly an exceptional figure. The scant evidence available, however, suggests that affection for one's pastor was fairly common.

> who honored Spangenberg and [considered] him a learned man and one who was good to the poor people. Furthermore, they say that as simple people, they did not understand his error, nor did they take part in it. Rather, as simple people, they wanted to judge the issue according to Mr. Luther's catechism and leave it at that.[46]

Thirty-three years after he was driven from Tal Mansfeld some laity still remembered Spangenberg for his erudition and his kind treatment of his parishioners.

Another indication of respect and even affection toward the Spangenberg family can be seen in the funeral of Katherina, mother of Cyriakus and wife of Johann, the first superintendent of the territory. As noted, upon her death 1576, she was denied customary funeral ceremonies due to her "Manichaean" beliefs and buried without the pomp befitting her station on orders of the superintendent.[47] Although Mencel forbade guests to attend the funeral, more than sixty people from the cities of Tal Mansfeld and Eisleben transgressed his order and came to her burial, including advisors of Count Carl. When the superintendent heard this, he placed those individuals under the bann, and commanded that her grave monument be removed.[48] Twice Mansfelders replaced the cross that had adorned her grave, only to have it removed again by the superintendent.[49] The willingness of these sixty people to defy the church's highest authority and incur punishment indicates a certain personal regard for Katherina Spangenberg and her family.

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[46] "…die das Spangenbergium ruhmen, das er ein gelerter, guthetiger Man, gegen armer leute gewesen, erklaren sie sich doch derneben dahin, das sie als einfeltigen layen seinen Irthumb nicht verstanden, viel weniger demselben zu gethan, sondern sie als einfeltige leute wolten sich nach das Herrs Lutheri Catechism richten und daran genugen lassen und gesetzt." Letter of Sebastian Ehrman and Johann Kegel (Tal Mansfeld pastors) to the Eisleben consistory, February 2, 1608. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 831, fol. 22r.

After their assessment of the people's motive for following Spangenberg, they continue: "ob gleich einer und der ander (Welchs uns aber unwissendt) den Spangenbergischen Irthumb in seinem Hertzen noch foviren und demselbigen anhangig sein mochte, hielten wir doch fur unser einfalt dafur, das deses nicht eben die principal Ursache obangedeuteter Krankheitt sein musten, Sondern andern mehre Ursachen zu finden wehren."

[47] Spangenberg writes that his mother was also denied absolution and the eucharist as she lay dying because she refused to condemn her son. *Mansfeldische Chronica*, in *Mansfelder Blätter* 31 (1917): 295.

[48] Spangenberg, *Mansfeldische Chronica*, in *Mansfelder Blätter* 31 (1917): 295.

[49] Spangenberg, *Caecitas Germaniae*, 287.

Finally, it is apparent from Spangenberg's correspondence that after his expulsion he retained close personal ties in the territory of Mansfeld. In a letter to Timotheus Schaller dated February 15, 1581, he informs Schaller that he intends to answer the letter of a certain widow and asks him to pass this news on to her. He indicates that another friend in the territory can provide Schaller with a fuller account of Spangenberg's current situation, so he will not recount everything in this letter. He iterates that he is closely following the Eisleben consistory's proceedings against all "the good, simple, people," a reference to some of the Mansfelder laity still in the territory. Finally, he writes, "I ask that on my account you greet Bastian Müller, and when you have the chance, D. Drachstedt and Pavell Pruffen, Caspar Karer, Samuel Spiessen and his mother and sister, also Martin Kniesen and all those who confess as you do, to whom you may freely show this letter, for I cannot write to each one individually."[50] Clearly Spangenberg kept up contact and even friendships with many of his former parishioners. In at least one case an exiled parishioner, a bookbinder named Jochem Flederwisch, followed Spangenberg to his new post in Schlitz, Hesse. It is unclear under what circumstances Flederwisch was banished from Mansfeld, and he lived to regret his decision to become a Mansfelder as he explained in a heart-rending letter to his mother.[51] But the point is, he initially followed the dean across Germany and spent much of a

[50] "Ich bitte von meinettwegen den Bastian Müller zu salutiren, deßgleichen auch mitt gelegenheit D. Drachstedtten undt Pavell Pruffen, Caspar Karer, Samuel Spissen und dessen Mutter undt Schwester, auch Martin Kniesen und alle eurer midtbekenner, die ihr dissen brieff woll lesenn lassen, dann ich Allen itzt inn sonderheitt nicht schreiben kann." Rembe, ed., *Der Briefwechsel des M. Cyricaus Spangenberg*, 2: 50.

[51] In May of 1583, Flederwisch wrote to his mother in Tal Mansfeld recounting the terrible turn his life had taken since leaving the territory. He began by telling her that he and his wife had been blessed with a daughter, who was still alive, but the birth had so weakened his wife that she had had to remain in bed for six weeks. Furthermore, Flederwisch was unable to find work, reducing him to transporting mail to earn a few pennies. He asked his mother whether she might be able to provide lodging for a few weeks until he and his family got back on their feet, and whether she might speak with Casper Aschenborner, Merten Eckardt, and Cyriakus Kaufmann (whom he refers to as *Gevattern*), so that they might intervene with the authorities to allow him back into the territory, if only for a few weeks. Finally, he writes, "Had I know ten years ago what I know now, I would have let those people fight who enjoy fighting. May God help me, for he could change this situation (Hette ich vor zehen jhar so viel gewust als ich nhun weis, ich wolt haben lassen streitten wer lust darzu gehatt hatte. Nhun gott helffe, nur der kans noch endern)." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 81v–83r. Flederwisch did return to Tal Mansfeld, not only for a time, but apparently for good. On August 16, 1583 he signed a document of retraction, condemning Spangenberg's teachings on original sin and asking forgiveness for the disobedience

decade with him rather than remaining near his family in the territory, a move that certainly suggests a close personal tie between the two.

The third reason for parishioner devotion to the Mansfelder pastors, and the one that is clearest in the sources, was of a legal and political nature. The pastors had been driven from their posts without due process. What is more, the new pastors had been installed without the consent of the Hinterort counts who held the *ius patronatus* for some of the clerical positions in Tal Mansfeld, and, of course, without the acquiescence of the parishioners themselves. As we have already seen, this did not sit well with them. Here we enter a gray area in terms of their motivations where it is difficult to distinguish between loyalty to pastors, loyalty to various counts, and the self-interest of the laity. The clearest evidence for this combination of factors comes from the Tal Mansfeld city council and the advisors to the Hinterort counts.

After the invasion, the superintendent and Vorderort counts sent new Eislebener pastors to Tal Mansfeld, but the city council refused to accept them, and the lay elders of the church, known Mansfelders, refused to pay them. In February 1576, the new pastors complained to the Vorderort counts that although they had approached the city council repeatedly, they were still not being remunerated and therefore suffered great deprivation.[52] Their supplication precipitated a stern response from the Vorderort counts to the city council. Omitting any formal greeting, the letter begins, "Sheriff and city council: you undoubtedly remember well how often we have graciously and considerately admonished and warned you to arrange with the church elders so that the poor pastors and servants of the church would receive their salaries at normal intervals."[53] Moreover, continue the counts, many of the parishioners remained insubordinate to their new pastors, for the counts heard daily of acts of disobedience directed against these

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he had demonstrated toward his new pastors. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 77v–78v.

[52] Andreas Drasdo and Daniel Hauwenschildt to the Vorderort counts, February 13, 1576. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 831, fol. 2v.

[53] "Schultheis und Thalherrn. Ihr wisset sonderzweifel euch wol zu erinnern wie offt und vielmals wir euch genedig unnd guetlich vermanet undt verwarnet, Das Ihr bey den Kirchvatern die voerordtnung thue woltet, Damit die arme Pastores und Kirchendienern Ihre besoldung gebuhrlicherweise bekomen mochten." Vorderort count, Hans Georg, to the Tal Mansfeld sheriff and city council, April 30, 1576. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 831, fol. 5r.

clerics.[54] Why did the parishioners, elders, and city council not accept these pastors?

The disputation of 1580 between the Schaller (and other parishioners) and the new dean, Autumnus, referred to above, helps clarify this issue. In his report of this event, Autumnus provided the following description of the laity's reasons for rejecting their new pastors.

> First, [the parishioners] still confess and consider their previous pastor M. Spangenberg and the others who, during the controversy, stood at his side and were unified with him in it, to be their proper servants and pastors. And so they reject our call and consider it meaningless.
>
> And they stood by this statement, protesting loudly against all of our explanations to the contrary. Those who were in the service [of the Hinterort counts] provide as their reason that it would be against their duty if they were to acknowledge us as their proper pastors, because their wellborn and merciful lords, just like the other lords, are counts of Mansfeld. And their lords have not called me and my colleagues, as did the other counts. Nor have [their lords] consented; rather they still acknowledge M. Spangenberg to be the proper pastor of this community.
>
> The other citizens, who are not in the service of the Hinterort counts, attached themselves to this protestation, but gave it a slightly different twist—namely, because they are responsible as citizens to all the parts [each section of the territory, e.g. each count], they could not approve our appointment because of their duties to the counts who had not chosen us. And they suggested that the right to call pastors, held by the Hinterort counts, was the reason they rejected us.[55]

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[54] "So befinden wir doch das wiederspiel und fast teglich allerlei Mutwillig zuruttigung, die den dienern des Worts von etlich ungehorsamen und spuren widerfehret." Vorderort count, Hans Georg, to the Tal Mansfeld sheriff and city council, April 30, 1576. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 831, fol. 5r.

[55] "Erstlich, das sie Ihre vorige Prediger M. Spangenberg und anderer so im wehrendenn streitte, neben Ihme alhie gedienet haben, und der sachen mit Ihm einig gewesen sind, noch fur Ihre ordentliche diener und Seelsorger haltten und bekennen, damitt unser beruff verworffen, und fur Nichtig erkent würde.

Solcher Auflage sind sie auch gestendig gewesen und bleiben und haben zu mehrer erklerung wieder unsern beruff lauter protestirt. Die so Herrn Diener sein wollen, auß dem Grunde das es wieder Ihre Pflichte wehre, wenn sie unß fur Ihre ordentliche Seelsorger erkennen solten, Aldieweil die auch wolgebornen Ihre gnediger herrn, Welche sowol, als die andern Herrnn, Graffen zu Mansfeldt wehrenn, mich und meine Collegas neben den andernn Graffen nicht zugleich beruffenn, auch in unsern beruff gar nicht consentirrtt hatten, Sondern M. Spangenbergen noch fur einen ordentlichen Pfarhernn diß ortts erkenneten.

Die andern aber so nur Bürger, und nicht Herrn Diener sind, haben sich solcher Protestation, sowoll mit anhengigk gemachtt, doch ein wenig mit einem andern schein, Nemblich weill sie den Herrn zu allen Theilen, mit Bürgerlichen Pflichten verwandt weren, wüsten sie dem Theill der in unsern beruff nicht gewilliget, darzu auch nichts gethan hette, auß notth Ihrer Pflichte auch nichts zubegebenn, und stelleten

Although, as we shall see in chapter seven, the laity were prepared to defend their doctrinal position in the debate, they were also acquainted with the legal grounds upon which to argue that their new pastors were illegitimate. In fact, the citizens of Tal Mansfeld repeatedly threw the accusation that their call was illicit in the faces of the new pastors. Already in 1576, Schaller charged them publicly with being improperly installed.[56] In a letter to Autumnus, the parishioners addressed him as "the Archdean in Tal Mansfeld, installed by *some* [emphasis mine] of the temporal authorities," and described Spangenberg and his colleagues as "ministers driven out without an examination and the proper pastors of this community."[57] This accusation is undoubtedly the reason that when Mansfelder laity did rejoin the official church, they were forced to sign a statement that read we "along with our proper pastors, now present" (*neben unsern ordentlichen predicanten itz ahnwesendt*) damn all Manichaean teachings.[58] This statement underscored the point that they were not only rejecting Spangenberg's teachings, but also him as their pastor, while at the same time accepting the doctrine and legitimacy of the newly installed pastors.

Evidence of lay loyalty toward pastors comes primarily from Tal Mansfeld, the pastorate of which made up only about one-sixth of the total number of clerics expelled from the territory. What about the parishioners of the other five-sixths? The issue is difficult to resolve for two reasons: first, few sources are available; second, many of the clergy who were expelled had not been in office very long, decreasing the possibility that close friendships and bonds of loyalty could have formed between pastor and parishioner. There is, however, occasional evidence from outside of Tal Mansfeld that parishioners remained devoted to their pastors after the clerics had been dismissed by the official church. The camaraderie between Anthonius Richter and Michael Spangenberg, Cyriakus's brother, appears to have been real, as the two of them lost their positions together, then collaborated in their continuing efforts to convince the Eisleben laity that original sin was

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den beruff den Graven deß andern Theils, so Ihn volzogen hetten zu Ihrer verantworttung." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 834, fol. 9r–v.

[56] Andreas Drasdo and Daniel Hauwenschildt to the Vorderort counts, February 13, 1576. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 831, fol. 2v.

[57] Report of Schaller et al. given to Autumnus on October 17, 1579. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 834, fol. 5r.

[58] Notel of Retraction, Feburary 20, 1579. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12 aIII, No. 833, fol. 24v.

the substance of humankind. A significant group of followers grew up around Wilhelm Sarcerius, who like Spangenberg, was the son of a former superintendent of the territory of Mansfeld. Sarcerius too was exiled for being a Manichaean in 1574. Furthermore, the inhabitants of Ziegelrode took in two expelled pastors and gave them protection for years before the authorities drove them out of that town.

After his expulsion, Spangenberg wrote that the poor parishioners of Mansfeld had had their beloved pastors unceremoniously removed without their consent, and new, foreigners foisted upon them.[59] In Tal Mansfeld the laity appears to have concurred, and evidence from the rest of the territory shows glimpses of the same, as clearly personal relationships played a significant role in their actions.

"He wished to remain faithful to Luther's teachings": The Laity and Luther's Legacy

For the theologians and pastors, the controversy over the nature of original sin was in large part a fight over Luther and his legacy. The Mansfelder clerics contended that Luther believed original sin was the substance of humankind, a position, they argued, that preserved Luther's doctrine of justification. The Eislebeners too boasted that Luther's teachings supported their position, insisting that they were true followers of the Reformer, and publishing works synthesizing his writings that best supported their views. In light of such claims, one might expect the Mansfelder laity to indicate the same desire to remain faithful to Luther's teachings and to employ the Reformer's writings to endorse their views.[60] Moreover, many of the laity had known

[59] "Es werden die Leute und Gemeinen an vilen orten gezwungen wider iren willen solche Pfarrherrn/ Lerer unnd Prediger anzunemen/ zu Vociren/ zu holen und zu hören/ zu denen sie keine lust haben/ mit derer Lere und Bekenntniß sie nicht einig sein können/ von denen sie auch öffentlich sagen und klagen/ das sie mit ihnen nicht zufrieden/ sondern sie mit unwillen haben und hören müssen/ auch darüber offt manchen heissen seufftzer lassen/ müssen gewalt leyden." Cyriakus Spangenberg, *Caecitas Germaniae*, 292.

[60] This may seem self-evident: of course the laity would hold up Luther as their patron. But by the 1560s, there appears to have been some annoyance with ceaseless attempts by theologians of various stripes to identify their theology with Luther. Already in 1563, Spangenberg had identified the following as one saying he frequently heard on the streets: "Does everything Luther wrote always have to be correct?" (*Muß es denn Alles recht sein, was Luther geschrieben hat?*). Spangenberg regards those who asked such questions as unthankful, like the citizens of Corinth who were ungrateful for St. Paul's words. In both cases, he threatens, they will get their reward. *Elegantiarum*

Luther personally, among them two of his nephews, both of whom had been with their uncle during his stay at the Coburg in 1530 as he anxiously awaited word from Philip Melanchthon on the proceedings before the emperor in Augsburg. Luther had sent one of them, Cyriakus Kauffmann, future sheriff of Tal Mansfeld, on the errand to deliver the Reformer's famous letter to his dying father.[61] Thus one might also expect exclamations from the laity about their spiritual and social proximity to the Reformer, and perhaps their unique ability to understand and interpret Luther. But do the sources raise these expectations to certainties? In other words, what was the nature of their relationship to Luther and how important was his legacy?

In situations in which they were required to testify before their new Eislebener clerics or the consistory regarding their views on original sin, the laity often invoked Luther, an appeal that becomes increasingly frequent after 1578 when the *Formula of Concord* was published. For the territory's church officials, the *Formula* quickly became the litmus test by which to distinguish adherents of the Mansfelders from their own.[62] The question must be asked, however, whether this invocation of Luther was merely a tactic used in interrogations ("I stand with Luther," gets one off the hook) or sloganeering ("Well, we were always good Lutherans") on the one hand, or an honest effort to grasp and adhere to Luther's position on the other hand.

Hearings before the church officials shed some light on the matter. On January 15, 1580, the Eislebener dean in Tal Mansfeld, Georg

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Veteris Adami, 54–55. This questioning of Luther's infallibility can also be found in an anonymous treatise that appeared in Mansfeld in 1579 entitled, *Ein einfeltiger Bericht an ein guten Freund Gottes. Auff die Frage/ Ob man sagen sol/ ich bin gut Lutherisch/ etc. Sampt einem Gebet/ umb Erhaltung Göttliches Worts/ in dieser letzten zeyt/ täglich zu bitten* (n.p., 1579). The author responded to a friend's question, whether one should even say, "I am a good Lutheran," for so many people were invoking Luther, Calvin, and others. Should not a good Christian say that he is merely a good Christian and not of Luther or of Calvin—echoing the Apostle Paul's words (I Corinthians 12), "I am of Paul, I of Apollos; and I am of Cephas." Are we not all Christians? The author rejects this notion in the end, suggesting that although one should not canonize Luther nor trust in his name, one must be thankful for the Reformer, remain faithful to his doctrine, and openly declare the truths he has demonstrated.

[61] *WABr* 5: 238–241.

[62] Spangenberg and his like-minded colleagues, already in exile for three years, had publicly rejected the *Formula of Concord*, in particular the first article devoted to original sin. Their condemnation can be found in manuscript form in Dresden, Loc. 10307/6, fols. 17v36v, where it is entitled, "Graff Volrat und Graff Carln zu Mansfelt Theologen Erclerung auf das Concordienbuch 1578." To my knowledge it was never printed.

Autumnus, summoned five men: Wolf Hirsch, Hans Gesell, Andreas Reinhart, Hans Bartenhenning, and Andreas Sachse. By this time, the dean and his fellow clerics in Tal Mansfeld had begun to refer to this group as "the old five" (*die alte funffe*), suggesting a certain amount of vexation with their continued adherence to the Mansfelder position. With the exception of Sachse, all appeared for the hearing. From the answers they provided it is clear that they had already been in negotiations regarding their predicament with the superintendent and consistory in Eisleben. But now they stood before the dean, the highest church authority in Tal Mansfeld and the author of the report sent to the consistory which related this interview.

The question posed by the dean was twofold: would they sign the *Formula of Concord* (particularly Article 1 on original sin), and would they be reconciled with the territory's church. Hirsch answered first, informing the dean that the five of them had been assured by the consistory in Eisleben that "no one would force anything new upon them, rather they would be allowed to remain faithful to Luther's teachings."[63] Now the dean instructed them to sign a book that they had never seen. How could they be asked to do this? The dean replied that each man would be given a copy of the article on original sin to read before he signed it. Hirsh answered that regardless of whether or not he decided to endorse the *Formula*, he and his wife desired to receive the Eucharist, a request that the dean rebuffed, insisting that Hirsch first provide his verdict on the question of original sin. Hirsch responded that even if it should come to pass that he and his wife accepted the *Formula*'s definition, "he was not of the opinion that he would reconcile himself with the church (or as he put it) allow himself to be judged from the pulpit."[64] Autumnus answered that Hirsch was required to respond one way or the other, clearly stating which side was correct in this controversy over original sin. "How had it suddenly become an error for one to believe and say that original sin is the corrupted human nature and essence," asked Hirsch. "Had not the superintendent himself, along with *Magister* Spangenberg confessed at Weimar that this is the clear teaching of this territory's church, and

[63] "…man wolle ihnen nicht newer aufdringen, sondern sie bey d. Luthers lehre bleiben lassen." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 48v.

[64] "…wehre er doch nicht bedacht sich mit der Kirchen zu versohnen, (oder wie ers nent) von der Canzal werten zu lassen." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 48v.

has always been so."[65] The dean, who appears to have realized that he was getting nowhere, replied that Hirsch had not been at the Weimar colloquium and therefore did not know what had been said there. So ended the discussion with Hirsch.

Andreas Reinhart was then asked whether he would sign the *Formula*'s article on original sin. He responded that he would not even read it, complained bitterly that he was not allowed to receive the Eucharist, "and begged ardently that no one should lead him away from Doctor Luther's teachings, rather allow him to remain faithful to them."[66] There followed a discussion on the Eucharist and the consequences of receiving it unworthily. "But [Reinhart] insisted," the dean wrote in his report, "that if he receives the Sacrament unworthily, the consequences affect only him, but not us, the servants of the church."[67] The dean replied that Chrysostom had written that he would rather lose his life than give the sacrament to someone who was unworthy. Furthermore, he, Autumnus, had seen no evidence in Reinhart's life that he had improved or changed his attitude for many years. Therefore he would not allow Reinhart access to the sacrament. Reinhart ended with the complaint that the churchmen were attempting to pry him away from Luther, "as if," wrote the dean, "we were trying to suppress Luther's teachings."[68] When Autumnus posed the same question to Bartenhenning, the layman replied concisely that "he had signed once with his baptism and to that he will remain faithful and hold to his catechism."[69]

Andreas Sachse did not appear for the hearing, but was on hand two weeks later when he, too, was asked whether he would sign the *Formula*. He replied that

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[65] "Wie es denn nun so bald zum Irthum worden wehr, wenn man gleubte und sagte, die Erbsunde wahre die menschen verterbte Natur und Wesen. Hatte doch der superintendent selbst zu Weimar, neben M. Spangenbergen bekend, dise wahre die einhellige lehre dieser graffschafft kirchen, die sie allewege gefert hatten." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 49v–51r.

[66] "…und hat hefftig gebeten, man solle ihn von D. Luthers lehr nicht führen, sondern dabey bleiben lassen." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 51r.

[67] "Das er aber meine, wenn ihn das Sacrament unwirdig empfehe, so gehe es ihm allein und nicht uns kirchendiener zu schaden." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 51r.

[68] "…als wehren wir die so d. Luthers lehre unterdrucken." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833. fol. 54r.

[69] "Er habe einmahl einen Unterschriben in der Tauff, bey dem will er bleiben, und sich an seinen Catechismum halten." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 19v.

> he would never sign the *Book of Concord*. From what he had heard, not even all the electors, princes, and others who had participated in its creation had accepted it. Nor did they consider it entirely correct. Therefore he will stick to his word and remain faithful to Dr. Luther's teachings and if [the dean and his colleagues] desired it, he would sign and confirm this answer with his own hand.[70]

The responses of four of "the old five" display diverse concerns. Hirsch had problems with the *Formula of Concord* because he had never seen it, desired the Eucharist, and was very much opposed to a public recantation. He attacked the superintendent overtly by raising the question of Mencel's confession at Weimar, while implicitly defending Spangenberg. Reinhart too rejected the *Formula* and desired the Eucharist, but he appears to have put more thought into the question of why he should have been allowed to receive it than the issue of original sin. Bartenhenning's answer is a clear denunciation of the *Formula* and an affirmation of his life-long religious beliefs as exemplified by baptism and the catechism. And Sachse too, repudiated the *Formula*, insisting that it is not nearly so widely accepted as his interrogators suggested.

But the theme that runs through each of their answers is a desire to remain faithful to the teachings of Luther. All but Bartenhenning mention Luther specifically at least once, and Reinhart does twice. And even Bartenhenning's answer appears to be an endorsement of Luther, his understanding of baptism, and the Lutheran catechism. For him, these things had defined his faith; other statements of belief were unnecessary. The expressed devotion to the teachings of Luther demonstrates that for at least some of the laity, siding with the reformer meant something.[71] The question is what? The evidence of these four

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[70] "Er wolle dem Concordien buch nimmermehr unterschreiben, Es sey, wie er hore, noch nicht von allem Chur und fursten [und andern] beteilligt und angenohmen [und also mit dem selbigen noch nicht] durch aus richtig. Derwegen wille er in seinem wort lassen, und bey d. Luthers lehre bleiben ja u. h. s. [Unser Herr Superintendent?] auch begehre, wille er diese antwort mit eigner hand bekrefftigen und unterschriben." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 20v.

[71] Many other similar examples exist in which laity invoke Luther's name either in hearings or in print. Hans Drachstedt wrote, "…Sintemhal Ich doch nichts anders *in specie* reden, schreiben, noch darthun kan, dan was E. E. selbst in der Biblia und aus denen, von diesem strittigen artickel, von dem seligen Luthero, auff denen ich mich in sonderheit zihen Ehr." Hans Drachstedt's Confession, May 15, 1595; Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 148v. Drachstedt also mentioned in a letter to Eislebener pastor Augustinus Thamm dated November 20, 1595, "Derentwegen will Ich hirmit nachmals geflehet und gebetten haben, man wolle mich bey meinem

examples provides an ambiguous answer. Aside from Bartenhenning, whose answer is veiled, none of the men stand solely upon Luther. None demonstrates an understanding of Luther's view on original sin, and adherence to the Reformer constitutes only part of each man's argument, not necessarily the chief or most important point.

But citing Luther's name also does not appear to be simply an effort to avoid difficulties with the church because Hirsch, the leader of the group, clearly called the superintendent a liar or recanter and even, to a certain extent, defended Spangenberg. In no way did he attempt to hide his true position behind the authority of Luther. It would have been pointless for him to refer to Luther for the tactical reason that the Reformer provided an unassailable authority in this interrogation. Perhaps we get a little closer to the meaning of the invocation of Luther in the answer of Hans Gesellen, the last of "the old five." Having been asked whether or not he would sign the *Formula of Concord*, Autumnus recorded Gesellen's answer: "He wishes to remain faithful to Luther's teachings and he was of a mind to do so. He understood them because we [the pastors] had recited them. He had also read what Luther had written, this and that. This he had well understood."[72] Thus Gesellen argued that he had heard, read, and was convinced that he had understood Luther. From his own perspective, adherence to Luther and the conviction that the Mansfelder interpretation of the Reformer's views was correct were the deciding factors in his choice to follow them.

Indeed, the laity often insisted that the Mansfelder explanation of original sin was that of Luther as demonstrated by the case of Barthel Regener, Spangenberg's brother-in-law. A leader in the mining industry, Regener had also made a reputation for himself among the churchmen

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einfaldig Bekentnus, welches auf der augspurgischen Confession, Schmalkaldischen Artickeln, Lutheri Cathecismo und andern seinen bewhertten schrifften, da er eigentlich von der Erbsunde handelt, beruhet, nach welchem ich mich alleine, negst Gottes wordt, richte." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 161r; moreover Georg Autumnus described Timotheus Schaller's and his cohorts' position as follows: "Furs andere haben sie eine verdeckte Antwortt gegeben von Ihrer Bekenntnüß, daß sie dabey fehste und bestendig beruheten, und dieselbige verstunden nach der Meinung deß Mannes Gottes Lutheri." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 834, fol. 20v.

[72] "Er wille bey D. Luthers lehre bleiben, das wehr er noch zu thun gesinnet. Er verstunde die weil wir sie lauteten. Er hat auch noch gelessen, als Luther geschrieben hatte, so und so. Solte sie seine wolle verstanden werden." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833. fol. 54r.

of Eisleben by openly refuting the Philippist theologian Jakob Andreae in a public conversation in 1569.[73] When the controversy over original sin broke out, he sided with his brother-in-law, a decision that cost him his professional position,[74] as well as a funeral and church burial. But Regener also copied out seven hundred passages from Luther's writings that he believed supported the Mansfelder position on original sin.[75] Whether or not one takes exception to his interpretation of Luther is unimportant. Regener was reading Luther and believed he understood the Reformer's writings.

The surviving nine confessions written by laymen or groups of Mansfelder laity[76] provide more ambiguous information. Four use citations from Luther's writings to support their views, three do not mention the Reformer at all,[77] and two mention him only in passing.[78] The four individuals or groups who cited Luther all did so in the same manner the theologians did, quoting sections of his writings that they believed confirmed the Mansfelder interpretation of original sin. The following is a list of citations from Luther included in the lay confessions.

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[73] Spangenberg, *Mansfeldische Chronica*, in *Mansfelder Blätter* 31 (1917): 295.

[74] Regener was in the Vorderort counts' mining administration at the time. The counts fired him along with all those who sided with the Mansfelders.

[75] Spangenberg, *Mansfeldische Chronica*, in *Mansfelder Blätter* 31 (1917): 295.

[76] I do not include here the confessions of the two counts, Volrad and Carl, as those have been analysed in chapter four, "The Counts and the Controversy."

[77] It is impossible to know why the authors of these three confessions did not use Luther, but it must be noted that the style of two of the confessions was not particularly accommodating to the citation of authorities. The two confessions in question are those of Hans Ötzen, which is written in the form of a prayer addressing God in the second person, and that of a miner, which runs a total of four lines. In addition to not mentioning Luther, these two also do not overtly cite any verses from Scripture. The third confession that does not mention Luther is that of the captive city council. During their imprisonment, they were asked to write out their confession, which speaks in rather general terms citing Scripture only once. It should be noted, however, that in their interactions with the Magdeburg administrator's commissioners, they do sometimes cite Luther's views on original sin as a reason why their pastors should not be considered heretics. Full citations of these confessions are provided below, and a thorough analysis of their contents may be found in chapter seven, "Lay Understandings of Original Sin and Lutheran Theology."

[78] Hans Dennert, a linenweaver, writes only that those who in Mansfeld do not understand what original sin is "do not read enough from God's Word and Luther's teachings." Hans Dennert, "Supplicatio," quoted in Spangenberg *Mansfeldische Chronica*, in *Mansfelder Blätter* 28 (1914): 399–403, here at 400.

Table 3. Luther citations found in lay confessions

Luther Quotation	Anonymous[79]	Stöckel[80]	Drachstedt[81]	Schaller, et al.[82]	Hans Ötzen[83]	Miner[84]	City Council[85]	Hans Dennert[86]	Baker[87]	Used by Mansfelder Clergy[88]	Used by Flacius[89]
"For this reason, Luther calls [original sin] nature sin or person sin, which is not committed as other sins, but lives and does all other sins and is the essential sin, which does not sin for an hour or a time. But where the person is, and as long as he lives, there is this sin also."[90]		X							X	X	X

[79] Anonymous, *Einfaltige Bekenntnis/ von der Erbsünde eines Leyen* (n.p., 1578).

[80] Christoff Stöckel, *Einfaltige Bekendtnis von der Erbsünde und von den wircklichen sünden uber andwortt auff dem Radthaus den 18 Februari 1579 zu Tal Mansfeldt durch Christoff Stockel.* Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833 fols. 91v–98v.

[81] Hans Drachstedt, *Bekenntnis*, Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833 fols. 149v–151v.

[82] Report of Schaller et al. to Autumnus. Wernigerode. A 12a III, No. 834, fols. 5v–8r. It should be noted that when Schaller and company later debated the question of original sin with the Autumnus and his colleagues, the laymen cited Luther many times. However, in the report of the proceedings Autumnus mentions only that they referred to Luther, but does not reference the specific passages from the Reformer's works.

[83] Hans Ötzen, *Ein schon christliches und warhafftiges gebett von gesetze und evangelinis gestellt durch Hans Oetz ein leye imm Thall Mansfelt gegewen im ihar unsers Herren Jhesu Christi anno 1575,* Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833 fols. 35v–36v.

[84] Anonymous, *Eines Christlichen Bergmans Kurtze Bekentnis* (n.p., 1578).

[85] *Bekenntnus der gefanngenenn Rath unnd annderenn personenn/ aus dem Thale Mannsfeldtt zu Gebichennsteinn in dem Streit vonn der Erbsunnde gethan den 17. Januarii, ao. 75.* Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, 79r–80v. Although the town council does not mention Luther in their confession, they do quote from him during their negotiations with the administrator from Magdeburg in autumn of 1574.

[86] Dennert, "Supplicatio," 399–403.

[87] Anonymous, *Böse Newe Zeittung und ein Erschröcklich Exempel der Erfüllung des Spruchs S. Pauli. Actorum 20. 30 auß euch selbs werden aufferstehen Männer die Verkehrte Lehre reden/ die Jünger an sich zuzuziehen/ Und S. Petri 2. Petri 2.1 sie werden neben einführen verderbliche secten/ etc.* (n.p., n.d).

[88] For the Mansfelder clergy's use of these quotations, see chapter 2, "Competing Views of Original Sin and Associated Arguments and Meanings," esp. [73].

[89] For Flacius' use of these quotations, see chapter 2, "Competing Views of Original Sin and Associated Arguments and Meanings," esp. [56].

[90] "Nu er aber das gelid nympt, das gar keyn werck hatt, denn das die natur und personlich weßen dadurch kompt, gibt er klerlich zuvorstehen, das es an dem gantzen

Table 3 (*cont.*)

Luther Quotation	Anonymous	Stöckel	Drachstedt	Schaller, et al.	Hans Ötzen	Miner	City Council	Hans Dennert	Baker	Used by Mansfelder Clergy	Used by Flacius
"If we are purified by faith, we are responsible to show ourselves before Christ, that is to confess that we are, in and of ourselves, complete sin and only made pious through his mercy."[91]	X	X									
"What is actually meant when one says from his heart, I am flesh? Flesh is damned, dead, pure sin, which is not spirit nor God, divinity nor life. In sum, it is of the devil and an eternal ember burning in hell. It must be changed or it cannot enter into heaven."[92]	X										
"It is a great piece of wisdom that we know that we are nothing other than sheer sin.… If you actually want to say what sin is, you must say according to this Psalm that sin is everything that is born from father and mother."[93]	X		X	X						X	X

weßen der natur feyle, das yhr gepurt und alles yhr herkommen sey vorderbet und sund, das ist: die erbsund odder natursund, odder personsund, die rechte hewbtsund; wo die nit were, ßo were auch kein wircklich sund. Diße sund wirtt nitt gethan, wie alle andere sund, ßondern sie ist, sie lebt und thutt alle sund und ist die weßentlich sund, die da nitt eyn stund odder zeyttlang sundigt, ßondern wo und wie lang die person ist, da ist die sund auch." *WA* 10/1/1: 508–509.

[91] "Wenn wyr nu durch seynen glawben gereyniget werden, sind wyr schuldig uns fur yhm zu erzeygen, das ist bekennen, das wyr von uns selber eytel sund seyn, unnd alleyn auß seiner gnaden frum seyn." *WA* 8:154.

[92] "Denn was ist gesagt, wenn einer von hertzen sagt 'Ich bin Fleisch'? Fleisch ist verdampt, tod, eitel sund, da kein geist noch Gott, noch Gottlich ding odder leben ist, Summa, es ist des teuffels und ein ewiger helle brand. Es mus anders werden oder kan nicht ynn himel komen." *WA* 20:421b.

[93] "Magna itaque sapientia est, scire, nos nihil esse quam peccatum.… Quin tu sic defini secundum hunc Psalmum, Peccatum esse hoc totum, quod est natum ex patre et matre," which was rendered into German as "Es sey eine grosse Weisheit, das einer wisse, das wir nichts dan lautter Sünde seindt.… Wann du eigentlich sagen wilst, was die Sünde sey so mustu nach diesem Psalm sagen, Sünde ist alles das, das von Vater und Mutter geboren wird." *WA* 40/2:322.

Table 3 (*cont.*)

Luther Quotation	Anonymous	Stöckel	Drachstedt	Schaller, et al.	Hans Ötzen	Miner	City Council	Hans Dennert	Baker	Used by Mansfelder Clergy	Used by Flacius
"We should acknowledge that we lie entirely and unequivocally in sin. Indeed, that we are sin itself, as we were when we were conceived and formed in our mothers' wombs. And those individuals, who acknowledge their impurity in this manner, and offer themselves entirely to God's mercy—they will obtain mercy."[94]	X										
"Behold, it is true, that before you I am a sinner. That also sin is my nature, my original essence, my conception, not to mention my words, deeds, thoughts, and entire life. I am an evil tree and by nature a child of wrath and sin. And therefore, as long and this nature and essence remains in and on us, so long are we sin, until the body dies and crumbles."[95]		X	X	X						X	X
"Sin is everything that is not redeemed through the blood of Christ made righteous by faith."[96]			X								

[94] "Wir sollen erkennen, das wir gantz und gar in Sünden ligen, Ja, das wir selbst Sünde sind, auch als denn, wenn wir entpfangen und in Mutterliebe gebildet werden. Und welcher Menschen auf auff diese weise ihre unreinigkeit erkennen, und sich nur alleine auf Gottes Barmhertzigkeit ergeben, die erlangen Barmhartzigkeit. Denn Gott wird durch solch erkentnis geehret, und vorheisset denen vergebung, die sich auf ihn verlassen." The author indicates that this passage comes from Luther's commentary on Psalm 51 (probably *WA* 40/2: 313–470), but I have been unable to locate the specific citation.

[95] "Sihe, so war ists, das ich fur dir ein sunder bin, das auch sunde mein natur, mein anhebendes wesen, mein empfengnis ist, schweig denn die wort, werck und gedancken und nach folgend leben.… Ein böser bawm bin ich und von natur ein kind des zorns und der sunde, und darumb also lange als die selbe natur und wesen ynn und an uns bleibt, so lange sind wir sunder…bis das der leichnam sterbe und undergehe." *WA* 18:501. It is noteworthy that when they quote Luther, the Mansfelders exchange the phrase "so lange sind wir sunder" for "also lang sind wir Sundt."

[96] "Sünde ist alles, das nicht durch das Blutt Christi erlöset, im Glauben gerechtt wirdt." The author cites Luther's gloss on Romans 3, but I have been unable to discover the origin of this quotation.

Table 3 (*cont.*)

Luther Quotation	Anonymous	Stöckel	Drachstedt	Schaller, et al.	Hans Ötzen	Miner	City Council	Hans Dennert	Baker	Used by Mansfelder Clergy	Used by Flacius
"For Adam is the source and originator of all sinners, but Christ is the source and originator of all saints. For from Adam, we inherit nothing other than pure sin, damnation and the eternal curse."[97]	X										
"Scripture demonstrates in all examples and teaches from cover to cover that our sin within us is not a work or a deed. Rather it is the nature and entire essence."[98]	X		X	X		X				X	
"One must not depart from nor deny [the clear and open Word of God and the sayings of the Scriptures], come what may. [One] should first allow the entire world to go to ruin, rather than change this divine truth. And if something is seemingly brought against it, for which you have no answer, you should rather acknowledge that you do not understand it, and command the issue to God before you say one word against the clear sayings."[99]	X	X								X	

[97] "dann Adam ist ain ursprung und haubt aller sünder, also ist Christus ain ursprung und haubt aller hailigen, dann wir von Adam nitt meer ererbet dann sünd und verdamnuß und die ewigen vermaledeyung." *WA* 10/3:276.

[98] "…das treybt die Schrifft inn allen exempeln und leren durch und durch. Unser sünde in uns ist nit ain werk oder ain todt, sonder ist die natur," which the Mansfelders quoted as: "Das treibet die schrifft in allen Exempeln und Lehren, durch und durch, Unser Sünde in uns ist nicht ein Werck oder That, sondern ist die Natur und gantzen Wesen." *WA* 12:403.

[99] "Von disen spruchen mus man nicht weichen noch sie leucken, es treffe, was es treffe. Und sollen ehe lassen alle welt verderben, ehe man dise gotliche warheyt endere. Und ob etwas scheynbarlichs wurde dagegen auffbracht, das du nicht kundist verantwortten, so solltu ehe bekennen, das du es nicht verstehist und Gott befehlist, ehe du widder dise klare spruch etwas zu lassest." *WA* 17/2:79.

The laymen need not have combed through Luther's works to find these quotations; the pamphlets and sermons of the Mansfelder clerics were filled with them. In some cases, however, I have discovered no precedent among the theologians' works for particular quotations, a fact that suggests some laymen, like Barthel Regener, may well have been reading Luther's works for themselves. In other cases, the authors apparently picked those passages from among the citations used by the pastors that most convinced them of the Mansfelder interpretation. Even so, the chart indicates that fewer than half of the laymen who wrote down their position on original sin quoted Luther as an authority. But of the half who did, each referred to him approximately five times, a number large enough to make the Reformer's writings a central component of their arguments.

These findings present a certain ambiguity. Some individuals appear to have considered Luther an important part of the argument for their own position on original sin. Others appear not to have. What is clear, however, is that adherence to a proper interpretation of Luther, a major component of the controversy among the pastors, did not always translate into a central concern for the laity. Sometimes this ambivalence took place within the same individual or group. In their dealings with the representatives of the administrator, the town council and eighteen burghers arrested on New Year's Eve, 1574 quoted Luther in support of the Mansfelder pastors. But when incarcerated in the administrator's prison, they wrote a confession fully supporting the Mansfelders without mentioning Luther.

Finally, in Luther's homeland, friends, relatives, and acquaintances might be expected to have insisted that owing to their social proximity, they could best understand the Reformer. But the sources offer little evidence of such opinions. Luther's nephew, Cyriakus Kauffmann, made the only reference to familial or geographic ties to the Reformer that I have discovered. During an interrogation that took place during his month long imprisonment, he was asked to state his confession regarding the controversy. "He answered," wrote the city secretary, "that to this point, he had had the opportunity to study and read the books of Luther, his dear relative, to which he remained devoted and hoped to continue to do so with God's help."[100] Even here familial

[100] "[Kauffmann] hat aber geantworttet das er sich bisher vermueg des unterrichts und vleisiger Nachlesung in D. Luthers Bücher, seines liben Vettern, gehalten, dobey

connections do not play much of a role in his defense, but are almost an afterthought.

In countless pamphlets, sermons, and catechisms, the Mansfelder clerics had attempted to tie their understanding of original sin to Luther's. Sometimes this resonated among the laity as they themselves insisted that they understood and accepted it, or even that it was the deciding factor. For others, it appears to have been one issue among many. And for still others, it seems to have made little difference. The Mansfelder clerics worked hard to keep the memory, vitality, and theology of Luther alive, but it seems that for the laity, even among those who demonstrated a high level of religiosity, this was not always a central concern.

Lay Reaction to Clerical and Temporal Authority

Chapter three of this monograph presented the Mansfelder clergy's repeated and forceful insistence that all laity had the right, ability, and responsibility to judge matters of doctrine; and it described these clerics' widespread anti-intellectualism and deep skepticism toward conventional logic and philosophical wisdom. It further addressed the way in which these views influenced their understanding of how the laity should interact with clerical and temporal authorities. The words and actions of the Mansfelder laity indicate that such injunctions found a great deal of fertile ground.

Evidence that the laity considered themselves capable of judging issues of doctrine reveals itself already during the negotiations between the Tal Mansfeld city council and the administrator in Magdeburg. Throughout the autumn of 1574, the city council insisted that their clergy taught only God's Word in accordance with Luther's interpretation. Responding to the administrator's command of September 15, 1574 to expel their pastors, the council recounted their clergy's teaching regarding original sin, then insisted that

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er auch mitt gottlicher Hulffe zubleiben gedachte." Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 110v. Later Kauffmann returned to the firmer stand on original sin that got him arrested in the first place. On February 20, 1579 he was called before the pastors of Tal Mansfeld and representatives of the administrator where he was commanded to condemn Spangenberg and his fellow expelled pastors. He refused and was denied absolution and the Eucharist. Spangenberg, *Mansfeldische Chronica*, in *Mansfelder Blätter* 30 (1916): 90.

> Because their [pastors'] teachings, as explained, are founded in God's Word and the writings of Luther, also in accordance with what the true, Evangelical church by means of a clear consensus has always taught, we do not want to lay a hand on such a true teacher as we have found the honorable *Magister* Spangenberg to be. Furthermore, to attack the apple of our Lord's eye would be difficult and unbearable to our consciences, for we would not be able in any way to defend ourselves before God.[101]

For the city council, the issue was a matter of conscience that prohibited them from expelling the pastors. But more importantly, they expressed no reservations about their own ability to authenticate their pastors' teachings as consistent with God's Word, Luther's writings, and the consensus of the Evangelical church. As the administrator applied more pressure on the citizens of Tal Mansfeld, the council and congregation toned down their rhetoric but essentially stuck to their position. When asked again to hand over the pastors they responded,

> With regard to Spangenberg and his colleagues, the council and congregation did not know of any incident in which one could say that *Magister* Spangenberg was sullied with Manichaeism or any other heresy. Rather, he had always purely and clearly presented the dear, divine Word to them, as it is found in the prophets, apostles, and writings of Luther. They hoped that by means of [this teaching and preaching] they might be saved.[102]

Once again the assumption here is that the council and congregation considered themselves capable of discovering the true Word of God, were familiar with Luther's writings, and would have been able to identify heresy had they encountered it. Whether or not their confidence was the result of the Mansfelder clerics' injunctions is debatable

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[101] "Dieweil den solche Ihre Lhere in Gottes Wortt und dem schrifften Lutheri gegruendett auch in den rechten Evangelischen Kirchen durch eynen einhelligen consens allweg biß anhero also belerett worden ist, So will unns an einem solchen trewen Lherer, wie wir den an dem Ehren Mgr. Spangenbergk bisher anders nicht befunden, die Handt zulegen, und also an dem augapffel unsers des Herren zuvorgreiffen, Im gewissen schwerr und untreglich, Ja vor gott keines weges zuvorandtworten fuerfallen." The Tal Mansfeld city council to the administrator of the archdiocese of Magdeburg, September 15, 1574. Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fols. 28v–29r.

[102] "Soviel aber Mgr. Spangenbergk, und seine mittgehuelffen anlanget, wueste sich Radt und gemeine nicht zuberichten, das gedachter Mgr. Spangenburgk, mit dem Manichaeischen schwarm, oder anderen secten beflecket wehre, sondern hette Ihnen das liebe gottliche wortt wie solches in der propheten, Aposteln und Lutheri schrifften, gegrundet, lautter und rein furgetragen, verhofften auch dadurch seelig zu werden." Report of the December 8, 1574 meeting conducted by the administrator of the archdiocese of Magdeburg's commissioner in Tal Mansfeld. Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 37r.

in this case, but other individuals exhibit even clearer self confidence that strongly suggests a connection.

Hans Dennert, a linen weaver, wrote boldly to one count, "But it is so, gracious lord, that I and others do not go to church in order to accept everything that is spoken as the Gospel or an article of faith, especially when it is not founded on the biblical, Holy Scripture."[103] For Dennert, the role of the layman in a church service was not that of passive, credulous receiver of the pastor's words, but of one who must carefully consider and assess their scriptural verity. Dennert also exhibited a clear strain of anti-intellectualism when he stated, "So in the recent past and still now, the useless crowd of fool-intellectuals…has been spreading many senseless ideas among the Christians."[104] At one point he suggested that God, in his love, decided to save the world through Christ alone, a concept "against all of the disputations and nonsense of the many erudite intellectuals."[105] In other words, the wisdom of God was incomprehensible to academics, sentiments that clearly echoed the views of the Mansfelder clerics.

One anonymous lay writer of a confession printed in 1578 also asserted his authority to judge questions of theology, tying this ability closely to a celebration of the simplicity of Scripture.

> This is my simple belief, by which I stand, for it is founded on the Scriptures and the writings of Luther. And I will not bother with the subtle disputations of the intellectuals. Despite the fact that I cannot answer all of their logical reproaches and arguments, I will not allow them to confuse me; rather I will follow Doctor Luther's advice…when he writes: One must not depart from nor deny the clear and open Word of God and the verses of Scripture, come what may. And one should let the whole world go to ruin before he changes this divine truth. And if something seemingly antithetical were brought against it which you cannot answer, you should first confess that you do not understand it and leave it to God before you admit anything against these clear verses.[106]

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[103] "Es ist aber, gnediger Herr, gleichwol an deme, daß ich und andere nicht darumb allhie in die Kirch gehen, daß alles, was geredt wird, von mir als ein Evangelion oder Artickel des Glaubens angenommen werden mußte, sonderlich wenn es nicht gegründet ist in Biblischer heiliger Schrift." Dennert, "Supplicatio," 400.

[104] "Also und nachdeme verlaufener Zeit bisher [hat] der müsige Haufe der Schalkgelahrten…viel ungereimtes Dinges unter die Christen gesprenget…." Dennert, "Supplicatio," 400.

[105] "…wider alles Disputieren und Possenwerk der Klüglinge und des gelahrten Haufens." Dennert, "Supplicatio," 399.

[106] "Dieses ist mein einfaltiger Glaube, darbey bleibe Ich, denn er hat grund in der Schrift und Lutheri Büchern. Und kere mich nicht an die Subtilen Disputatione der Hochgelarten und ob Ich gleich auff alle ihre vernünfftige fürwürffe und einreden

In this passage three of the Mansfelder clerics' central themes converge. First, the laity is able to judge in matters of doctrine. The quotation follows immediately the author's definition of original sin, which, he insists, was founded on the Scriptures and Luther's writings. Second, he rejects any form of intellectualism or logical arguments of the learned, while standing on the simplicity of his confession. Third, he relies on Luther's injunction to adhere to Scripture, the meaning of which is open and perceptible to all. Nor was the anonymous author the only laymen to employ this quotation from Luther. Christoff Stöckel likewise insisted that he would "follow the precious and holy man, Dr. Martin Luther,"[107] after which he quoted this same citation from Luther's church postil. Occasionally anti-intellectualism broke through during consistory hearings as well. Andreas Reinhart, when asked whether he would sign the *Formula of Concord*, replied that he would not, "for behind the book are just a bunch of pure intellectuals."[108] Likewise, Wolf Hirsch declined to sign, saying "the book was too high for him."[109]

But sometimes the laymen argued their simplicity to gain sympathy from their opponents, a tactic that was roundly rejected by the Eislebener clergy. Hans Drachstedt called himself a poor, unlearned, simple layman (*arm, ungelert, einfaldig man und Leyhen*), suggesting that the consistory was hounding him because "they would like to practice and perform a knightly deed against me, a poor man who does not understand."[110] But Drachstedt, although no theologian, was a university trained lawyer who, while at the University of Wittenberg, had heard Luther himself and had practiced his profession in the

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nicht antworten kan, so sol mich solches doch nicht irren, sondern wil hierinnen D. Luthers rath folgen der…also schreibet. Von dem Hellen und offentlichen Wort Gottes und den Sprüchen der Schrifft mus man nicht weichen noch sie leugnen, es treffe was es treffe, und sollen ehe lassen alle welt verderben ehe man diese Göttliche Warheit endere. Und ob etwas scheinbarliches wurde dagegen auffgebracht das du nicht könnest verantworten, so soltu ehe bekennen das du es nicht verstehest und Gott befehlest ehe du wider diese klare Sprüche etwas zulasset." Anonymous, *Einfaltige Bekenntnis/von der Erbsünde eines Leyen*, 3–4. For the source of the Luther citation, see note [99].

[107] "Und wil himit des deuren und heiligenmannes D. Martini Luder volgen." Stöckel, *Einfaltige Bekendtnis von der Erbsünde*. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 98r–v.

[108] "…es stehen lauter, hohe heupter unter dem buche." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 19v.

[109] "das Buch sey ihm zu hoch." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 19r.

[110] "…und als an mir armen, unverstendigen manne, eine Ritterschaft uben und erlangen mochte." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833. fol. 148v.

employ of the counts and in the highest courts of the empire. He was neither illiterate nor unlearned and his protestations of simplicity fell on deaf ears, as did those of the Tal Mansfeld laymen involved in the debate with the dean, Georg Autumnus, and his colleagues. At one point Autumnus wrote in his report, "Regarding their excuse of simplicity, we did not answer at all, because they themselves had begun to dispute regarding this proposition."[111] Finally, Autumnus's predecessor, explaining his various attempts to convince Jacob Wennige to recant his Manichaean views and return to the church, wrote, "that I was forced to deny him absolution because with him it is not a question of simplicity, but rather a pure ruse, and in light of all his various reproofs, a conscious decision."[112] In other words, the Eislebener pastors themselves believed that although some laity were merely arguing because of recalcitrance, others actually understood the issue.

But the simple fact that some laity wrote statements of faith regarding their views on original sin suggests a confidence in their abilities to understand the issue, and some of these confessions were likely a response to Mansfelder clerics' directive that they publicly state their beliefs. Three in particular demonstrate this fact. Two, those of "a simple layman"[113] and of a "Christian miner,"[114] were published together in a pamphlet in 1578. Because there is no information on an editor or the circumstances under which they were produced, it is difficult to know why they wrote. It is doubtful that the goal underlying their publication was merely the transfer of knowledge, for there were more than enough clerical writings on the topic available. It is more likely that they were attempting to make a statement, perhaps with some clerical supervision. But what was it?

The answer lies in the introduction to the third confession, that of a baker,[115] where the editor explains the document's origins.[116] The author had presented his work on October 31, 1589 to the new

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[111] "Uff die Entschuldigung Ihrer Einfalt halben, ist nichts geantwort worden, weill sie selbst angefangen haben, von der Proposition zu disputieren." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 834, fol. 13r.

[112] "daß ich ihme also die Absolution, weil es mit ihm nicht eine Einfalt, sondern ein lauter Betrug und mit seiner vielfeltigen Lesterung bewußt, vorsagen mußte." Nicolai, "Historischer und Summarischer Bericht," 32.

[113] Anonymous, *Einfaltige Bekenntnis/von der Erbsünde eines Leyen.*

[114] Anonymous, *Eines Christlichen Bergmans.*

[115] Anonymous, *Böse Newe Zeittung.*

[116] Although it is possible that the editor wrote the entire document himself, the public nature of the church's reaction to the confession strongly suggests that a layman had some role in its composition.

Eislebener pastor in Tal Mansfeld. Perhaps the date chosen by the baker and traditionally associated with Luther's nailing the *95 Theses* to the castle church door in Wittenberg was mere coincidence. Or perhaps the baker wished to make a statement about his adherence to Reformation theology in Tal Mansfeld, the childhood home of Martin Luther, where annual celebrations of the Reformer's birth and death were instituted in 1562.[117] In any case, as a result of the confession the pastor immediately banned the baker from the Eucharist and all church rites. Four days later the superintendent himself officially condemned the confession. Three weeks thereafter a cleric read the superintendent's condemnation from the pulpit to the baker's fellow congregants. In the context of the published confession, the "mistreatment" of this artisan constitutes the "evil news" (*Böse newe Zeitung*) referred to by the editor in his title.

Following this explanation of the confession's origins, the editor presents the text for his readers' judgment, but breaks it into paragraphs. Between each paragraph he inserts a short citation from one of the superintendent's pamphlets or sermons on the issue of original sin. In every case, the baker's words directly contradict the superintendent's. Via this comparative format the reader is left to decide between the views of the baker and the territory's foremost churchman. But for the editor, the layman is the clear winner. In fact, the teachings of the Eislebeners represent the fulfillment of the prophecies mentioned by the editor in his title (Acts 20:30, 2 Peter 2:1), which warn the faithful to beware of false teachers. The larger conclusion to be drawn is unmistakable: the simple baker comprehends and articulates the truth; the leaders of the church do not. It seems likely that this claim regarding who holds proper doctrine was also the implicit point behind the publication of the other two lay confessions written by the layman and the Christian miner.

For the Mansfelder clerics, lay confessions demonstrated that the official church had fallen into error and that its leaders no longer possessed the truth. Rather, the simple laity understood the issue correctly, thereby demonstrating their ability to judge issues of doctrine. For the laity themselves, the mere act of writing a confession was an affirma-

[117] Beginning in 1562, Spangenberg began to mark the anniversary of Luther's birthday and date of death with a sermon devoted specifically to the Reformer and his work. These sermons were later compiled and published as *Theander Lutherus*.

tion of their role as arbiters in the doctrinal debates. Put in slightly more interpersonal terms, the great confidence that the Mansfelders displayed in lay abilities to comprehend doctrine bore fruit, and a desire to play this significant role within the church appealed to some of the Mansfelder laity.

Lay people's conviction in their own ability to reject clerical opinion also spilled over into resistance against temporal authority. On January 19, 1579, the city council stood before representatives of the administrator and the new Eislebener pastors of Tal Mansfeld. The authorities demanded to know whether the councilmen would adhere to the oaths that they had sworn during their captivity in January 1575 to be obedient to their new, properly installed pastors, and return to church. As reported by one of the pastors, the city councilman, Philipp Oemler, responded "that he could not go along with our teachings, but held fast to Spangenberg's, and there was no way in which his gracious lord, the administrator, would force him to believe otherwise. If [the administrator] could not allow him to remain in Mansfeld, then he must move to another place where he would be tolerated."[118] The administrator took Oemler's suggestion and expelled him from all of Mansfeld's and Magdeburg's lands, although it does not appear that this command was enforced.[119] In the same interview, Christofell Schwartze defiantly stated that "he believed that his corrupted nature was the original sin, that the human being had been changed entirely and completely to sin, and that Spangenberg had taught him nothing that was false."[120] For his statement, Schwartze immediately lost his position on the city council. But the fact remains, both men had no problem defying the temporal (and ecclesiastical) authorities, even when they suffered for it.

Finally, during the parish visitation of Tal Mansfeld in 1579, the worst "Manichaeans" were separated from the crowd, then further divided between men and women. The superintendent spoke at length to each of the sexes, explaining their errors and requesting that they

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[118] "…er könnte es mit unser Lehre nicht halten, sondern hielte es mit Spangenbergk, und es würde ihn sein gnädigster Herr, der Administrator, zum Glauben nicht zwingen. Wollte er ihn zu Mansfeld nicht leiden, so müßte er an einen anderen Ort ziehen, da er geduldet würde." Nicolai, "Historischer und summarischer Bericht," 29–30.

[119] Nicolai, "Historischer und summarischer Bericht," 33.

[120] "…er gleubete, daß seine verderbte Natur die Erbsünde wäre, daß der Mensch were ganz und gar zur Sünde worden und Spangenberg hätte ihn nichts unrecht gelehret." Nicolai, "Historischer und summarischer Bericht," 30.

return to the church. Most of the men complied. Many of the women, when they heard that their husbands had acquiesced, accepted the conditions of the superintendent. But two of the women

> would not allow themselves to be taught, but stood fully on their belief that Spangenberg had not taught incorrectly. Among these were Greta Stöckel or Dreylings and David Rorer's wife. In addition, they said that they were the sin itself. The princely commissioner commanded them to leave not only the Mansfeld lands, but all the lands of the archdiocese of Magdeburg within four weeks.[121]

These two Mansfelders defied both the pastors and representatives of the prince to their faces, actions for which the women paid dearly.

Both the words and conduct of the Mansfelder laity tell a clear story: they considered themselves qualified to judge matters of doctrine and were willing to flout ecclesiastical and temporal authorities who saw otherwise. To this end they wrote and submitted confessions, refused the sacrament from their new pastors, declined when asked to recant their positions, debated with highly educated churchmen, allowed themselves to be arrested, even expelled from the land, their shops to be closed, their loved ones refused absolution and the Eucharist prior to death, and their corpses to be buried outside of official cemeteries. All these actions demonstrate that they considered themselves capable of coming to a decision in the matter of how original sin and human nature should be defined. For some of the laity, this empowerment appears to have been a significant factor in their decision to side with the Mansfelder clergy.

Conclusion

The motivations that various individuals among the Mansfelder laity had for siding with that group fall across a wide spectrum from purely secular to at least in part religious. As with the counts, political considerations probably most impacted those closely involved in

[121] "Ihrer zwo wollten sich gar nicht unterrichten lassen, sondern bestunden stracks darauf, daß Spangenbergk nicht unrecht gelehrt hette, unter welchen die eine Greta Stöckels oder Dreylings, die andere Davidt Rörers Weib gewesen. Sagten auch darneben, sie weren die Sünde selbst. Denen haben die fürstlichen Commissarri befohlen, daß sie innerhalb vier Wochen nicht allein die Herrschaft Mansfeld, sondern auch das ganze Erzstift reumen sollten." Protocol for the 1579 Visitation of Tal Mansfeld, *Mansfelder Blätter* 19 (1905), 24–27, here at 27.

the politics of the time. But for the counts, other issues also drove their actions, and the same is true of the laity in general. Family relationships and friendships helped push individuals in one direction or another. Connections with pastors, many of which had little to do with doctrine and everything to do with interpersonal relations, also played a role. A desire to preserve the legacy of Luther, in some cases expressed as a somewhat superficial group identifier, and in others in terms that demonstrate a deeper understanding of the ideas of the Reformer, added another factor to the mix. And finally, the clerical insistence on the centrality of the lay folk in discerning true doctrine from false, with its concomitant anti-authoritarianism, also held an appeal for some of the Mansfelder laity. It remains is to be determined, however, whether doctrine and belief too were factors among the laity, and that is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

LAY UNDERSTANDINGS OF ORIGINAL SIN AND LUTHERAN THEOLOGY*

Since 1978, when Gerald Strauss published his book *Luther's House of Learning*, much scholarly ink has been spilt over the question of the laity's grasp of doctrine during the Reformation. Strauss himself concluded that ordinary people failed to truly understand the theological differences between Luther and Rome.[1] Since then, many others have echoed his opinion.[2] The slightly less categorical thesis of A.G. Dickens has likewise gained acceptance: for the laity, the Reformation was less a matter of doctrine and more a matter of working practical belief.[3] But what happens when the question of lay comprehension of doctrine is applied to the controversy over original sin as it transpired in the territory of Mansfeld? Clearly the laity there became deeply involved for a variety of reasons, but are there indications of a significant degree of doctrinal comprehension of the central issues? And, if so, what role did beliefs play in accounting for lay actions during the controversy? For if the question: "Are you an Accidenter or Substantioser (*Bistu een Accidenter oyder Substantioser?*)" is to be interpreted as anything other than sloganeering, the degree to which these individuals understood the central issues of the debate must be ascertained. This chapter describes the most comprehensive articulations of lay belief that have survived, then analyzes the degree to which their authors understood the content of the debate and its implications for wider Lutheran

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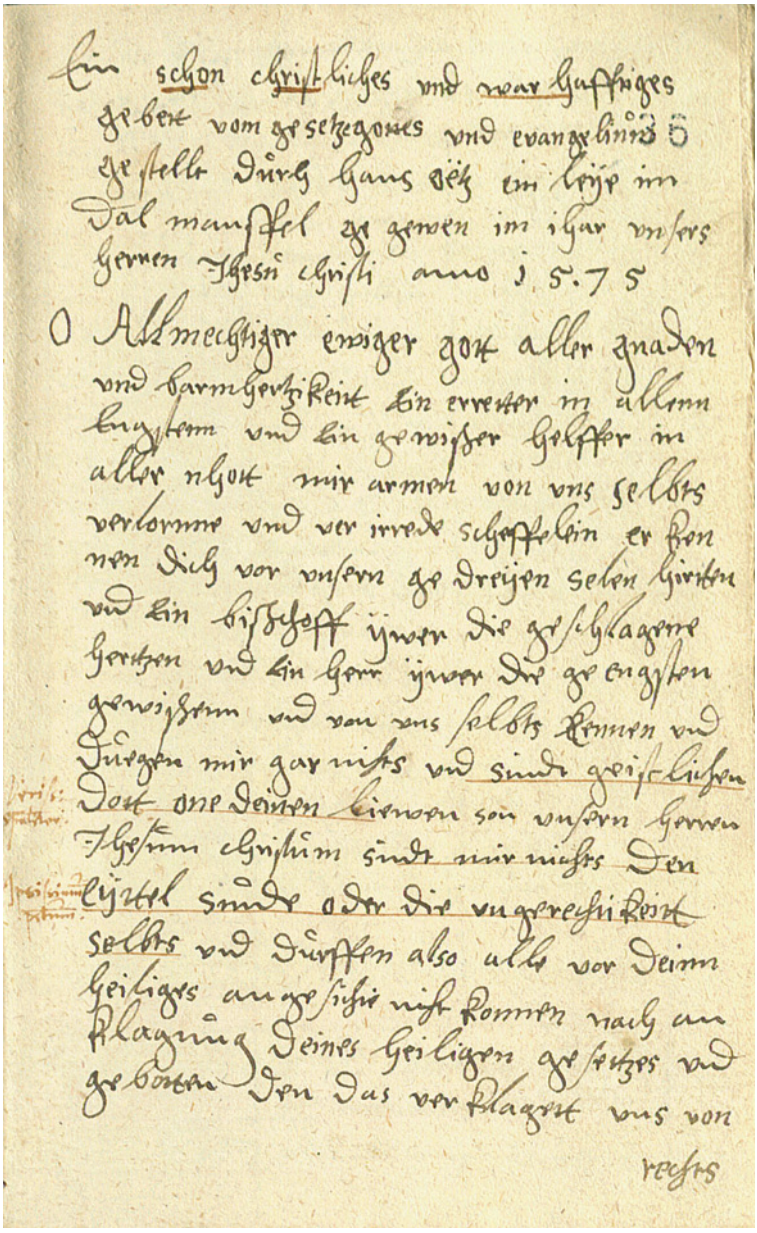
* Portions of this chapter have appeared in Robert Christman, "'I can indeed respond': Lay Confessions of Faith in Late Sixteenth-Century Central Germany," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 39 (2008): 1003–1019.

[1] "A century of Protestantism had brought about little or no change in the common religious conscience and ways ordinary people conducted their lives. Given the people's nebulous grasp of the substance of their faith, no meaningful distinction could have existed between Protestants and Catholics—a distinction arising from articulated belief, conscious attachment, and self-perception." Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 299.

[2] See the Introduction, especially pages [4–6].

[3] A.G. Dickens, *The German Nation and Martin Luther* (London: Edward Arnold, 1974), 132–34, 224–25. Cf. R.W. Scribner, *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany* (London: Hambledon Press, 1987), 123.



Ein schon christliches vnd warhafftiges
gebet vom gesetzegottes vnd evangelinis
gestellt durch Hans Oetz ein leye im
Thal mansfelt gegewen im ihar vnsers
Herren Jhesu christi anno 1575

O Almechtiger ewiger got aller gnaden
vnd barmhertzikeit ein erretter in allen
nöten vnd ein gewisser helffer in
aller nhot wir armen von vns selbs
verlorne vnd verirrede schefflein er bar
men dich vor vnsern gedreijen seelen hirten
vnd ein bischoff jnnen die geschlagene
hertzen vnd ein Herr jnnen die geengsten
gewissen vnd von vns selbs Armen vnd
dürfftigen mir gar nichts vnd sindt geistlichen
Dott one deinen lieben son vnsern herren
Jhesum christum sindt wir nichts den
eitel sünde oder die vngerechtikeit
selbs vnd dürfften also alle vor deinm
heiligen angesicht nicht kommen nach an
klagung deines heiligen gesetzes vnd
gebotten den das verklagett vns von
rechts

Hans Ötzen, *Ein schon christliches und warhafftiges gebett von gesetze und evangelinis gestellt durch Hans Oetz ein leye imm Thall Mansfelt gegewen im ihar unsers Herren Jhesu Christi anno 1575*, Landeshauptarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt, Abteilung Magdeburg, Standort Wernigerode.

theology. The evidence demonstrates that among a substantial number of the laity from across the social spectrum, a truly impressive understanding of various doctrinal positions and their place in Lutheran theology existed.

The Nature of the Lay Confessions

Fourteen lay confessions devoted to the question of original sin have survived from the period between 1573 and 1594, eight of them published and six in manuscript form. The authors are: Counts Volrad and Carl (who together authored or co-authored five statements),[4] a lawyer,[5] the imprisoned Tal Mansfeld city council together with eighteen citizens,[6] an anonymous miner,[7] an anonymous baker,[8] a shoemaker,[9] a linen weaver,[10] a group of eighteen citizens of Tal Mansfeld,[11] a man described simply as a layman,[12] and an anonymous layman.[13] As noted above, a report of the debate between about twenty Mansfelder laity and Autumnus along with two of his colleagues also speaks directly to the issue.[14] Because the counts have already been addressed in chapter four, their confessions will not be included in this discussion. The remaining statements range in length from a paragraph (the miner), to fourteen folio sides (the shoemaker). All take the Mansfelder side in the debate. With few exceptions the contents of these confessions and the debate prove derivative of the scores of pamphlets and sermons

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[4] Count Volrad, *Christliche Und Dapffere Antwort*; *Bestendige/ und in Gottes Wort Gegründte Bekentnis*; and *Bestendiger/ und warhafftiger Gegenbericht*; Counts Volrad and Carl, *Der Wolgebornen und Edlen Herrn*; Count Carl, *Christliche und Richtige Bekenntnuss.* Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833 fols. 119r–121v. For a discussion of the counts confessions, see chapter four, "The Counts and the Controversy," esp. [151–158].

[5] Hans Drachstedt, *Bekentnis*, Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833 fols. 149v–151v.

[6] *Bekenntnus der gefanngenenn Rath,* Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, 79r–80v.

[7] Anonymous, *Eines Christlichen Bergmans Kurtze Bekentnis.*

[8] Anonymous, *Böse Newe Zeittung.*

[9] Stöckel, *Einfaltige Bekendtnis*, Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833 fols. 91v–98v.

[10] Dennert, "Supplicatio," 399–403.

[11] Report of Schaller et al. to Autumnus, Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 834, fols. 5v–8r.

[12] Ötzen, *Ein schon christliches,* Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833 fols. 35v–36v.

[13] Anonymous, *Einfaltige Bekenntnis/ von der Erbsünde eines Leyen.*

[14] The report on this debate can be found in Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 834. The minutes are no longer extant.

produced by Spangenberg and his clerical colleagues. For the most part, then, they do not provide an example of the laity developing its own, distinctive religious views;[15] however the confessions do allow insight into the motivations underlying their production, as well as the depth of understanding of their authors. A brief description of the author(s), circumstances under which he (or they) wrote, and the content of their text illustrate the range of individuals involved and variety of approaches they took.

In 1578, a statement of belief entitled, "A Brief Confession of a Christian Miner" found its way into print under indeterminate circumstances, but it seems likely that a Mansfelder cleric had a hand in it. The miner asserts that God created humankind thoroughly righteous and in His own image, but through the fall into sin humankind has become its opposite, namely completely unrighteous and in Satan's image. However, the work of Christ returns the fallen individual to his or her former status.[16] This simple outline, describing the human condition in three stages (prelapsarian, postlapsarian, and in light of justification), is a common approach in many of the lay confessions.

The anonymous baker, who presented his confession to Autumnus on October 31, 1589,[17] begins his confession as follows:

> I believe and confess that the tree, the spring, source, cause, inventor and doer of all real sin, which all pure Lutheran teachers until now have called original sin, the chief sin, person sin, essential sin (real sin is to be distinguished from this sin as the fruit is from the tree), is not only the guilt of Adam's Fall, but also to corrupted nature, which falls short of the glory of God. Our nature is entirely powerless and incapable of obeying the law of God and has become the devil's own, a spring and source of all thoughts, movements, desires, words and deeds, which are against the law of God and subject to eternal death and damnation if it is not forgiven.[18]

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[15] Interest by modern historians in cases where the laity formulated its own unique religious understandings appears to have led to a devaluation of instances where parishioners accepted clerical teachings. The assumption seems to be that pressure from elites to conform to certain beliefs somehow lessened their significance in a person's life. But the acceptance and internalization of established religious views required understanding and judgment on the part of the recipient and could become a legitimate and genuine source of inspiration.

[16] Anonymous, *Eines Christlichen Bergmans Kurtze Bekentnis*.

[17] For the circumstances surrounding the presentation of this confession, see chapter six, "Extra-doctrinal Forces Affecting the Laity," [245 ff].

[18] "Ich glaube unnd Bekenne: das der Baum, der Brunn, die Quell, ursprung, Ticter, Thäter oder Thäterin aller wircklichen Sünden/ welche alle reine Lutherische lehrer bißher die Erbsünde, Hauptsünde, Personsünde, Wesentliche Sünde (die Wircklichen

Approximately sixty verses or paraphrases from Scripture follow, each describing the fallen status of humankind. Thereafter the author reviews ten more that imply that fallen humankind receives righteousness through Christ and the Word of God, another ten admonish the reader to rebuke the outer man and renew the inner man, and five that indicate that the flesh will be raised on judgment day and transformed into its heavenly version.

Little information on Hans Ötzen has survived other than the fact that he produced a work entitled "A Good, Christian, and True Prayer Regarding the Law of God and the Gospel," but under what circumstances is unclear.[19] He was considered suspect by the Eislebeners, as a manuscript of his prayer found its way into the consistory files. In 1581, Ötzen signed a document recanting his position on original sin and promising to have no more contact with the Mansfelder adherents. He was not a member of the Tal Mansfeld city council, nor among the group of leading citizens arrested in 1575, nor does his name appear in any other visitations or consistory hearings.

Ötzen's prayer, as his title suggests, examines the relationship between Law and Gospel. The concept of original sin enters the discussion only briefly, and in fact Ötzen never uses the term. He begins with a description of humankind's condition under the law. Without Christ, humanity is a dry and unfruitful tree that does not belong in the beautiful garden with the believers and the angels, but rather with its patron, the devil. Humankind must acknowledge and confess that before God's law it deserves nothing better. For the law says that in the day in which one eats of the forbidden tree, he will die, and that means both body and soul. The result for the nature of humankind is that "We are nothing other than complete sin and unrighteousness itself and may not come into [God's] holy presence according to the accusation of [the] holy law and commandments, for they accuse us continu-

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Sünden: damit als früchte von dem Baum zu underscheiden) genennet haben, nicht allein sey die schuldt von Adams Fall, sondern auch die verderbte Natur, so da mangelt deß Ruhms, den sie an Gott haben solte, verkaufft under die Sünde, Natürlicher weise gantz Krafftloß und untüchtig, dem Gesetz Gottes gehorsam zuleisten, des Teuffels leibeigen: Ein Brunn und Quell aller und nur solcher gedancken, Bewegunge, lüste Wort und Wercke, die wider Gottes Gesetze sind, dem ewigen Todte unnd verdamnis unterworffen: Wo es nicht vergeben wirdt. Anonymous, *Böse Newe Zeittung*, 1.

[19] Ötzen, *Ein schon christliches*, Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fols. 35v–3r. See an image of the manuscript's first page on page 251.

ally and justly, as is their function."[20] Thus for Ötzen, humankind is itself sin and unrighteousness, the line in his prayer that got him into trouble, for it is underlined in red by a member of the consistory.

Ötzen then turns his attention to the Gospel, which, he writes, vanquishes the accusation of the law. God has not imposed the condemnation of the law, but given humankind a new teaching, the Gospel, which demonstrates His wonderful mercy and charity.[21] The law reflects sin and produces wrath, but God has shown grace and mercy. It is now our hope, continues Ötzen, that "out of unrighteousness, He will make righteousness; out of death, life; out of darkness, light; out of the devil's children, children of God."[22] This quote, also underlined in red, drew criticism from the consistory, as it too suggests that humankind is substantially evil or unrighteousness.

Christoff Stöckel, a shoemaker whose daughter married Spangenberg's eldest son,[23] had personal connections to Spangenberg that may have motivated his decision to side with the Mansfelders. Nonetheless, his confession indicates a thorough understanding of the nature of the controversy. In February of 1579, at the command of the consistory, he presented a written statement describing his views on original sin. The following day, pastors and representatives of the administrator of the archdiocese of Magdeburg discussed his confession with him, but he refused to accept their arguments and spent the night in jail.[24] The next day he acceded to their definition of original sin and agreed to return to the official church and attend the Eucharist within fourteen days.[25] But three months later, Stöckel's pastor reported that the shoemaker and his wife still adhered to their former position.[26]

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[20] "*sindt wir nichts den eytel sunde oder die ungerechtigkeit selbs* und durffen also alle vor deinn heilige angesichte nicht kommen, nach anklagung deines heiligen gesetzes und gebotten, den das verklagett uns vom rechts und seines ampts wegen alle augenblick." Wernigerode MS Rep. A12a III, No. 833, fol. 35v.

[21] "…sondern [du] hast uns einander lere gegewen, nemlichenn das heilige evangelium, das zeiget uns klerlichenn wiederum an die grose gnade und barmhertzigkeitt unser liewen gottes." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 35r.

[22] "…*das aus ungerechtigkeit, gerechtigkeit; aus dott, lewenn; aus finsternis, licht; aus deufels kinder, gottes kinder werden sollen*." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 36v.

[23] Spangenberg to Jacob Eckart, September 4, 1591. Rembe, ed., *Der Briefwechsel des M. Cyricaus Spangenberg,* 2:58.

[24] Nicolai, "Historischer und summarischer Bericht," 30–31.

[25] Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 24v.

[26] Nicolai, "Antwort auf die vorgelegten Fragen," 19.

Stöckel's confession begins with a statement recounting the Christian history of salvation. God created Adam pure, good, righteous and in His image, but as a result of the fall into sin, mankind became evil, sin, and the devil's form. But through Christ, humanity is again made righteous and the image of God is restored, temporally through faith, but with full realization in eternity. Next Stöckel describes sin using I John 3:4, the verse employed by the Mansfelder clerics for that purpose. He claims that sin is unrighteousness, everything that does not measure up to the law. In fact, the entire Scripture demonstrates that man's nature, heart, senses, reason, body, and soul are unacceptable before the law, and therefore are sin. Stöckel divides sin into two forms, original sin and real sin, which proceeds from the former. "Original sin," he claims, "is Adam and Eve's sin and disobedience, along with the innate sinful character and nature of our corrupted flesh, which we have received from them with the result that the entire nature and substance of humankind is corrupted to its foundations."[27] In this statement lies a paradox that gave the consistory fits. That original sin is Adam and Eve's sinful character and nature suggests that sin is a substance, which tends toward the Mansfelder position. On the other hand, that original sin has corrupted human nature to its foundation resembles more closely the Eislebeners' position, namely that original sin is a corruption of nature, not corrupted nature itself. Stöckel then turns his attention to the implications of his definition of sin for Christian practice. First, if one acknowledges that due to original sin he is full of shameful desires, he will not let them rule him. Second, he will be thankful to God for sending his Son to be Savior of the world.

Hans Dennert, a linen weaver in the town of Artern and among Spangenberg's staunchest supporters, was harassed by his Eislebener pastor, who had him imprisoned and then expelled from the town. Dennert fled to Tal Mansfeld, only to be taken captive by the soldiers from the archdiocese of Magdeburg and held prisoner for a month along with the city council and other burghers.[28] He remained active in Mansfelder circles, for on February 19, 1579, a delegation con-

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[27] "Dii Erbsund ist Adams und Eva Sunde und *ungehorsams sambtt der bessen von Ihnen uns angeporn sundtliche ardt*, und Naturs unsers verderbetten Fleisches das dii gantze Natur und wesen des Menschen Im grunde verderbtt ist." Stöckel, *Einfaltige Bekendtnis*, Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 93v.

[28] Spangenberg, *Mansfeldische Chronica*, in *Mansfelder Blätter* 30 (1916): 87.

sisting of the new Eislebener pastors in Tal Mansfeld and representatives of the administrator in Magdeburg examined him regarding his views on original sin. After two days of talks, he declared himself to have accepted their arguments and agreed to return to the official church and receive the Eucharist.[29] But in July of 1586, the dean of Tal Mansfeld accused Dennert of being a Manichaean who refused to attend the Eucharist. Although he allowed himself to be convinced to attend the Eucharist, he refused to sign a statement of reconciliation with the church.[30]

Dennert's confession is actually a letter addressed to one of the counts in which the weaver describes his position on original sin, argues for its scriptural basis, and asks the count to protect him from his enemies. He argues that human nature is indeed original sin, as confirmed by John 3:6, "That which is born of flesh, is flesh," and explains that everything that militates against the spirit is unrighteousness and sin. He continues,

> But when I, a simple layman, pray for forgiveness of all my sins in the Lord's Prayer, I desire that God will not attribute to me my evil thoughts, words, and deeds, but also in the same way that He will not impute to me my corrupted, evil nature and essence, which I am responsible to give over to Him completely holy and pure.[31]

Dennert also notes that many Lutheran theologians had begun to differentiate between original sin and human nature, referring directly to the Eislebener position, but concludes that this is a novelty developed to conceal their own disobedience: "Thus I am not familiar with this difference—because before I arrived here from Sonderhausen, I never knew or heard of such a thing, for I have heard [of this] only here. I am not of like mind with them, nor do I accept their position."[32]

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[29] Nicolai, "Historischer und summarischer Bericht," 30.

[30] Consistorium Protokollen 1584–1588. Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 10, fol. 207r.

[31] "Doch dunket gleichwol mich einfältigen Leien, wenn ich im Vaterunser bitte umb Vergebung aller meiner Schuld, daß ich auch begehre, wie Gott mir meine bösen Gedanken, Wort und Werke nicht wolle zurechnen, daß er mir auch gleichergestalt nicht meine verderbte böse Natur und Wesen zurechnen wollte, welche ich ihme gantz heilig und reine zu überantworten schuldig." Dennert, "Supplicatio," 401.

[32] "Wann ich dann mit demselben Unterscheid nicht fast bekannt, weil ich, ehe ich von Sondershausen hierher kommen, nichts davon gewißt noch gehöret, ohne was ich allhie vernommen, bin ich nicht ihres Sinnes, noch hierinne mit ihnen zufrieden." Dennert, "Supplicatio," 400.

For the next confession, little information exists regarding the identity of the author, his social status, or the circumstances under which he wrote. We know only that it was printed in 1578 under the title, "The Simple Confession of a Layman on the Issue of Original Sin"[33] along with the miner's confession discussed above. The author approaches his work as the theologians did, namely with a definition of original sin based on a biblical references, followed by proof passages, Luther quotations, and citations from the Lutheran confessions. He defines original sin as follows:

> It is certain that no reason can grasp or understand what sin is. Rather it must be believed according to the revelation of the Scriptures, which say that sin is unrighteousness (I John 3). What is not right but unright—that is, what does not measure up to God's exactitude or law—that is certainly sin. But the natural man, his heart, senses, soul, reason, body, and soul, his entire nature does not measure up to God's law, [and] is not so right, pious, holy, and good as it should be according to the law. This is demonstrated throughout the Holy Scriptures, which no one can deny, lest he wishes to call God's holy word lies. So it follows that our entire nature and essence, in and of itself (with the exception of Christ and grace) is unrighteousness and also sin.[34]

He then elaborates, "And because unrighteousness and sin are, before God, a thing, so are also original righteousness and original sin. And therefore our corrupted nature is original sin, and original sin is nothing other than our corrupted nature."[35] The anonymous author of this confession relies almost exclusively on Luther as his justification, selecting seven citations from the Reformer's writings that he believes

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[33] Anonymous, *Einfaltige Bekenntnis von der Erbsünde eines Leyen*.

[34] "Es ist gewis, Das keine Vernunfft ausdencken noch verstehen kan, Was Sünde ist. Sondern, Es mus aus der schrifft offenbarung gegleubet werden. Nu spricht die Schrifft, Sünde ist das Unrecht (I Johan. 3). Was nu nicht recht, sondern Unrecht ist, das ist, Gottes Rechte oder Gesetze nicht gemess ist, das ist gewislich auch Sünde. Das aber des natürliche Menschen, Hertz, Sin, Muth, Vernunfft, Leib auch Seel, Seine gantze Natur, Gottes Gesetze nicht gemess, nicht so Recht, From, Heilig und Gut ist, als es nach dem Gesetze sein solte, zeiget die gantze Heilige Schrifft, und wird solches niemand leugnen, Er wolte denn Gott in seinem heiligen wort Lügenstraffen. Und demnach folget, das unser gantze Natur und Wesen, an im selbst, Ausser Christo und der Gnade, Unrecht und demnach auch Sünde sey." Anonymous, *Einfaltige Bekenntnis*, 1.

[35] "Und weil Unrecht und Sünde, für Gott ein ding ist, so ist auch für ihme Erbungerechtigkeit und Erbsünde Eines. Und demnach ist unsere verderbte Nature Erbsünde, und Erbsünde anders nichts, denn unsere verderbte Natur." Anonymous, *Einfaltige Bekenntnis*, 1.

endorse his position, followed by four more from the Augsburg Confession and Schmalkald Articles. His confession remains focused upon the definition of original sin, for he never attempts to indicate how it might impact broader doctrines.

While imprisoned during the month of January 1575, the city council and citizens who had been arrested by the administrator's men were commanded to write a confession outlining their understanding of original sin. Among this group, a variety of occupations were represented: thirteen individuals were associated with the mining industry and eleven with the urban trades. In addition, there were also seven men who held the office of sheriff (*Schultheiss*) at some point, one city secretary, and two individuals at the highest levels of the judicial administration of the mining district.[36] No evidence suggests that any of them were university educated. They wrote their confession on January 17, 1575, in response to "a threatening command" (*bedrawliche erforderung*), after having been prisoners for two weeks. Three folio sides long, the confession contains a brief overview of the entire biblical history of damnation and salvation, with an emphasis on the issue of original sin.

"We believe and confess," begin the men, "that we were first created in Adam, our ancient father, as God's good creatures."[37] But the devil tempted Adam, he disobeyed the law of God, and died an eternal death. In fulfillment of God's promise that if you eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you will die, when man sinned he "lost the righteousness and blessedness in which he was created, and before the holy countenance of God and according to his righteous law became sin in a spiritual sense. The result was that nothing good remains in him, neither skin nor hair, marrow nor bones, body nor soul, inward nor outward powers."[38] Thus like Adam, they continue, the human race became entirely corrupted, dead to good, and conceived

[36] *Bergschoppen*, who were individuals responsible for settling disputes over mining rights and issues.

[37] "Wir glauben und bekennen, das wir erstlich in Adam unsernn Alttvatter zu Gottes guthen creaturen erschaffen seindt." *Bekenntnus der gefanngenenn Rath*, Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 79r.

[38] "…die angeschaffenen gerechtigkeit und seeligkeit verloren, und vor Gottes heiligen angesichte nach seinem gerechtenn gesetze, geistlicher weise zur suenden worden, Also des in Hautt und Haar, Margk und beinen, Leib und Seel, Innerlichen und auserlichen Krafften, nichts guts ahn Ihm blieben ist." *Bekenntnus der gefanngenenn Rath*, Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 79r–79v.

in sin, as David said in Psalm 51. "From there," insist the captives, "when we come before the holy countenance of God and wish to justify ourselves, we must say that with the exception of His grace and the redemption of Christ our Lord, there is absolutely nothing in or on us that is good."[39]

Next the council and burghers turn their attention to the means by which humankind can be saved from its horrible predicament. God has had mercy on his corrupted sinful creation, they explain, so that it might not go entirely to ruin, and for the sake of his Son's will. For when man is reborn in holy baptism through water and the spirit, the old Adam in and about him is drowned and killed. And through this wholesome flood, everything in and on him that is born from Adam is washed away so that he is reborn as a child of God and heir of Christ. But the struggle continues. The city council and burghers note that although the old Adam daily and hourly moves people to evil deeds, nonetheless, this old Adam has been drowned in baptism and destroyed. Thus real sins and evil deeds are no longer accounted to the Christian, but forgiven through daily repentance and contrition before God on account of his Son's bitter suffering and death.

From the perspective of the administrator, this confession was not orthodox, and the group remained in prison for two more weeks. Thereafter most of the men acquiesced and were allowed to return home. But two remained unmoved and were exiled from the territory. And of those who returned to Tal Mansfeld, over half would appear later in the sources, accused by the Eislebeners of being Manichaeans.

Hans Drachstedt, a jurist trained at Wittenberg and a member of the influential Eisleben family in whose house Martin Luther breathed his last breath, was an advisor to the Hinterort counts and practiced law in the imperial courts. He wrote his confession late in life, twenty years after the invasion of Tal Mansfeld. In the winter of 1594 and spring of 1595, Drachstedt held negotiations with the consistory in order to be accepted back into the official church. The Eisleben pastorate by this time had completely turned over, so that none of the clerics now serving had been present during the early 1570s when the

[39] "Daher wir denn, so wir vor gottes heilges angesichte tretten, und uns rechtfertigen wollen, sagen muessen, das ausser seiner gnade, und Christi unsers Hernn Erlosung, lauter nichts guts In und an uns ist." *Bekenntnus der gefanngenenn Rath*, Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 79v.

controversy erupted. Drachstedt was in bad health, clearly nearing the end of his life, and wished to reconcile with the church prior to his death. As part of these negotiations, the consistory asked him to write a confession regarding his views on original sin, but the consistory deemed the confession insufficient and heretical, with the result that Drachstedt was not allowed to return to the official church. Two years later, however, just weeks before he died, he signed a statement reconciling himself to the church and accepting the *Formula of Concord*'s position on original sin.[40]

Drachstedt's confession is peculiar. He acknowledges that the consistory has asked him to respond to the central questions of the debate, but instead of providing his own answers, he lists five verses from the Scriptures, one short citation from the *Augsburg Confession, The Apology to the Augsburg Confession, The Schmalkald Articles*, and *Luther's Small Catechism* each, and four citations from other writings of Luther.[41] By doing so, "he does not answer yes or no to either of the questions,"[42] as the consistory members reported in their response to his confession. Nonetheless, it is clear where Drachstedt stood on the questions, for the citations both from the Bible and from the writings of Luther are those used by the Mansfelders to justify their understanding of original sin. In fact, his first scriptural citation gives him away as he takes his point of departure for his definition of sin from I John 3, "Sin is the unrighteousness," the verse employed by the Mansfelders to argue that sin is substantial, everything contrary to the law of God and, therefore, the entire person. Drachstedt's last citation, from Luther's church postils, was also a favorite of Spangenberg and his clerical followers: "Scripture demonstrates in all examples and teaches from cover to cover that our sin within us is not a work or a deed. Rather it is the nature and entire essence."[43] Drachstedt's citations address only original sin and its definition, not going beyond to comment on its implications for Lutheran doctrine. Nor does he, as pointed out by the pastorate, truly answer the questions posed to him.

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[40] Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 195v.

[41] Drachstedt, *Bekentnis*, Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 149v–151r.

[42] "er weder mit Ja noch Nein auf einen, noch den andern seindt antwortet." Drachstedt, *Bekentnis*, Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 155v.

[43] "Das treibet die schrifft in allen Exempeln und Lehren, durch und durch, Unser Sünde in uns ist nicht ein Werck oder That, sondern ist die Natur und gantzen Wesen." Drachstedt, *Bekentnis*, Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 150v.

When the Eisleben pastorate refused to accept his confession, he agreed to provide a more complete statement of his position on original sin. But again he did not write himself, rather sent two books by known supporters of the Flacian position on original sin from outside of Mansfeld to the consistory, insisting that these works represented his beliefs and asking for a reaction to them.[44] Finally, he appealed to imperial law that no one should be forced to believe something against his will.[45] The pastors' response to the books was to state that they were contrary to the *Formula of Concord*, for in them "it is denied that original sin is an accident,"[46] and to indicate that these books answered the central questions of the controversy improperly. Thus ended the negotiations until two years later, when, as noted, shortly before his death, Drachstedt accepted the *Formula*'s definition of original sin.

Because of the uniqueness of Drachstedt's confession, a few aspects should be noted. First, he approaches the question of original sin with a lawyer's precision, meaning that he does not look to the wider implications of his position on original sin but limits himself to its definition. Second, by virtue of the citations he picks, it is clear that he is Mansfelder, and the pastors in Eisleben treat him as such. Third, he never stands on his own authority but challenges the pastors to refute others who have written on the subject, from Luther, to other churchmen, to imperial law. Finally, by citing the books of contemporary theologians, he demonstrates that he is familiar with works on the issue of original sin twenty years after the invasion of Tal Mansfeld.

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[44] The first text was *Repetitio: Das ist Widerholung der Norma Christlicher Lere, dazu die reinen Evangelischen Kirchen in Nider Österreich durch Gottes gnade sich bissher bekennet haben und noch bekennen/ Sampt notwendiger Erinnerung der richtigen warhafftigen Lere und Bekenntniss von dem Menschen und von der Sünde oder Erbsünde, wie vor jetzigem streit, in den Evangelischen der reinen unverfelschten Augspurgischen Confession zugethan Kirchen, …geleret…Den beyden löblichen Ständen, der Herrn unnd Ritterschafft in Österreich in unter der Enss, etc. also ubergeben von etlichen ihren Predigern,* (n.p., 1581); the second text was a treatise Drachstedt refers to as *Buchlein, Johan Weriles gewesenes Pfarhers zu Ortasch in Schwaben*. Many of the Mansfelder pastors expelled from the territory eventually found refuge in Austria. It is interesting that Drachstedt kept up with the wider controversy by reading the treatises produced in Austria and Schwaben—a fact that suggests a real interest in the debate.

[45] Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 161r.

[46] "Da geleugnet wird, das die Erbsund ein Accidens sey." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 168v. Response of Eisleben pastorate, November 26, 1595. I have included this quotation to demonstrate that although the opponents of Spangenberg in Mansfeld during the 1570s were unwilling to openly call original sin an *accident*, their followers twenty years later clearly define it as such.

The confession of Timotheus Schaller and his comrades represents by far the most complex and lengthy example of lay opinion (outside that of the counts) that has survived from the controversy in Mansfeld. It is, in fact, not a single confession but a statement of belief followed by the report of a debate with Autumnus. On October 4, 1579, the Vorderort counts installed Autumnus as dean in Tal Mansfeld with a mandate to root out the Manichaean heresy. After assessing the situation, the dean invited the key lay Mansfelders to a "friendly conversation" (*freundtliche gesprech*) on November 16, 1579. All begged off, citing work or other engagements, but they sent him a statement of their beliefs regarding original sin that articulated the differences of opinion they had had with Autumnus's predecessor, Cyriakus Nicolai. The two sides agreed to meet and debate, an event that occurred on February 8, 10, and 16, 1580.[47]

The confession is unique among the laity's statements of belief in that it is based upon the New Testament distinction between flesh and spirit in diametric opposition to each other. The laymen take their point of departure from Galatians 5:16–17, which they interpret as follows: "…a newborn person (someone baptized in Jesus Christ) is twofold, namely spirit and flesh, which are two contrary things, always at war and in conflict with one another."[48] If the flesh gets the upper hand and captures the spirit, then the spirit must act according to the flesh. But if by the grace of God, the spirit is victorious, the flesh must be subject to the spirit. In these passages from Galatians, continue the laymen, sin is not described as an evil character (*art*) that lives in humankind and fights against the spirit. If that were the case, the apostle would have described three different things—two that fight against one another and the third in which these carry on the struggle. Or he would have indicated that the postlapsarian flesh was still

[47] It is unclear how many laymen took part in this debate. Autumnus writes that many (*zimlicher anzall*) Manichaeans were at the debate, but he mentions only their leaders in his report, all of whom were in the service of the Hinterort counts: Timotheus Schaller, Valtin Metzeler, Anthonius Reichardt, and Hans Happach. These men, along with Philip Oemler, Hans Leonardt, Bastian Rauch, Hans Engelman, and Michael Schlanck also signed the confession written for Autumnus, outlining the differences of opinion the laymen had with Autumnus' predecessor, Cyriakus Nicolai. Spangenberg places the number of lay participants in this debate at 18.

[48] "…ein Newgebornen Menschen (verstehet, der auff Jesum Christum getaufft ist) zweyerley sey, Nemblich Geist und Fleisch, welche alßo, zwene widerwertige feinde, stetigs wieder einander zufelde liegen und streitten." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 834, fol. 6r.

essentially good but had been overcome by this evil character, with the result that the evil character and flesh now fight against the spirit (two against one).[49] "But" they conclude,

> because the apostle describes the flesh very clearly and completely (by which he means body and soul, nature and essence); and because he indicates that such flesh, born of flesh devoid of spirit of God, fights against the spirit; and because he makes no distinction between the flesh and the evil character within the same (which according to Cyriakus Nicolai's opinion should be a distinct thing, which dwells in our nature, lives, wills, and rages, and moves the nature to sin), it follows irrefutably . . . that the natural man is himself the evil tree (for the apostle speaks of only two things, flesh and spirit, and does mention a third). Although he was originally created good, man has become evil and brings forth evil fruit. Therefore, if he is not renewed through the grace of God in Christ, and otherwise engrafted into Him, he will be cut down and must be thrown into the fire.[50]

Here the laymen argue that St. Paul speaks of humankind's substance as flesh or spirit, never mentioning a third thing that invades the neutral substance of humankind, thereby making it evil—a notion championed by their former pastor, Cyriakus Nicolai, they claimed. But they themselves conclude that a foreign substance is not what makes the human evil, rather the flesh itself, which is the substance of the humankind.

After citing Augustine and Luther in support of this position, the laymen turn to an argument based upon common knowledge. "We have many frightful examples from history where the devil possesses a part of a person, a living part, but takes him away, body and soul, which is a sign of God's wrath toward the entire corrupted human

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[49] The argument and the explanation that follows is one employed by Spangenberg, but only very rarely. It is certainly not one of the Mansfelders' standard arguments.

[50] "Weill aber der Apostell, alleine Rundt und Deuttlich setzet, das Fleisch (darunder Er leib und Seell, Natur und wesen, will verstanden haben), wie solches Fleisch, auß fleisch, one ausser Gottes Geist geborn, streitte wieder den Geist, und keinen unterscheidt machet, zwischen den fleisch und der böße arth In demselbenn, welches nach Cyriaci Nicolai meinung, ein unterschiedenes ding sein soll, In der Natur wonendt, lebendt, wilendt, tobendt und die Natur zu Sundigen bewegendt, Volgett unwiedersprechtlichenn, dieweill der Apostell nur von 2 alßo geist und Fleisch und nichtt vom dritten redet . . . das der Naturliche Mensche selber der böse baum sey der da, ob er woll gutt geschaffen, doch böse wordenn, und böse fruchte bringett, darumb auch wo er durch die gnades gottes in Christo nicht verneuett, und anderß gepropffet, wirdt abgehawen, und Ins hellische feuer geworffen werden muß." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 834, fol. 6v.

nature."[51] They contend that if there were still part of humankind's nature that was good, God would not allow the devil to take the entire person off to hell, only that evil thing within his nature.

In this case, the laity's approach to the controversy is somewhat different from what we have seen, relying on a clear, powerful logic. In their model, flesh represents fallen, corrupted human nature, which is implied to be original sin. The body and soul, nature and substance of humankind is entirely flesh, born devoid of the Spirit of God and antithetical to it. Thus no distinction between original sin and the substance of humankind can be made. The spirit, which in their model is defined as the Spirit of God, comes from outside of the person and takes control of him, becoming his substance if it can overcome the flesh. Thus for these laymen, humankind must fit into one of the two categories, spirit or flesh. Moreover spirit and flesh (or original sin) are no longer abstract ideas, but tangible substances, physical things.

From this confession, Autumnus gathered the twelve propositions that he considered heretical, which formed the focus of the second day of the debate. The first day was devoted to a discussion of the laity's doubts about the legitimacy of the call of Autumnus and that of and his colleagues as Tal Mansfeld's pastors in light of their predecessors' unceremonious expulsion. The third day of the debate focused on the interpretation of quotations from various church fathers and more contemporary theologians cited by the laymen in support of their views. The twelve propositions addressed on day two, and the report from Autumnus on the discussions that followed each proposition, are as follows:

1) *Original sin is actually a substance*. The laymen denied that Spangenberg had said this. Autumnus replied that if one denies that original sin is an accident, it must be a substance, so Spangenberg is forced into supporting this proposition. The laymen responded that to suggest that original sin is in and of itself an essence would be false and Manichaean. But, "if [this proposition] was used and designated for the corrupted human nature and substance, it would be right and correctly Lutheran. Therefore," continued Autumnus

[51] "Wir habenn in den Historien viel schrecklicher Exempell, das der Teuffell die Menschen eins Theils besitzt, eins Theils Leibhafftig, mit Leib und Seell gar hinwegk furth, welches ein Zeichen des Zorns Gottes, uber die zugrundt verdorbene Menschliche Natur." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 834, fol. 7v.

in his report, "they considered the first way of understanding the proposition incorrect and false, but the second as right and good."[52]

2) *Original sin is the corrupted nature, humankind's body and soul itself*. The clergy argued that this proposition was merely a cover for the first one, to which the laymen answered that the word *sin* is used in the Bible in only one sense, to designate the human being itself. As proof they cited I John 3:4, "Sin is everything that is against God's law." The clergy argued, in contrast, that the Scriptures employed the word *sin* in various ways, sometimes meaning real sins and other times meaning original sin. In I John 3, the author is speaking of real sins, not original sin.
3) *That there is absolutely no difference between corrupted nature and original sin*. The pastors insisted that if one affirms that original sin is human nature, then by definition the opposite is also true, namely that the corrupted nature is original sin; the two are therefore indistinguishable. Since the pastors had already disproved the first proposition to their own satisfaction, they felt obliged to also address the second, the spuriousness of which they offered to demonstrate from pamphlets composed earlier in the controversy. In his report, Autumnus writes that the laymen responded with ramblings on a variety of issues and insisted that the distinctions were too complicated for them to understand. Furthermore, they complained that they were being rushed. In spite of all this, they eventually declared themselves content with the pastors' explanations.
4) *That the corruption of nature is the same as corrupted nature*. The pastors forcefully denied the verity of this statement, with Autumnus reading his explanation from a treatise against Christopher Irenaeus regarding this point. The laymen receded a few paces and conversed among themselves. Upon their return, they apologized again for their simplicity, but said they would like to defend their position by citing some writings of Autumnus's allies among the Eisleben pastorate. Although this request was denied, they nonetheless continued to argue for the proposition's verity, insisting that the Ten Commandments accuse the entire person, not something different

[52] "Wen sie aber gebrauchtt und gefurrt würde, von deß Menschen verderbten Natur und wesen, daß wehre sie recht und gutt Lutherisch. Derwegen so hieltenn sie die in Erstenn verstande fur Unrecht und falsch, in anderen aber fur Rechtt und gutt." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 834, fol. 11v.

or distinct within him. Thus the corruption of nature and corrupt nature should be viewed as one thing. They also cited Bugenhagen's letter to the Philippists in which he wrote, "We are all sinners and sin itself (*sumus peccatores et ipsissimum peccatum*)."[53]

5) *That original sin must be baptized in the name of the Trinity and must become a child and heir of God*. The pastors responded simply that this proposition had never before been suggested in the history of the church. Furthermore, many novel and absurd conclusions necessarily follow from it. Moreover St. Augustine, in his controversy with Julian, denied this proposition. The laymen answered that although it was novel, it was nonetheless correct and not to be damned. For in this case, the object at issue was not a normal substance, but the corrupted human substance in particular, itself original sin. Although the pro and contra were discussed at length, writes Autumnus, the laymen would not budge from their position. They again claimed simplicity, but nonetheless refused to change their views.
6) *That God is merciful to original sin or that He will adopt it through His grace*. The pastors stated their position clearly and concisely: the Holy Scripture says that God is merciful to sinners but not to sin. The laymen answered that they themselves were not necessarily comfortable with this statement, but because it followed from proposition two, they must adhere to it.
7) *That original sin will be changed into righteousness*. The pastors explained that a sinner or a sinful, unrighteous person was made righteous through faith, but sin itself would not be changed into righteousness. The laymen responded that since original sin was the substance of humankind, they could not reject this proposition, citing Isaiah 1:18, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be wool." Autumnus insisted that both Luther and Flacius had commented on this verse, interpreting it contrary to the laity's understanding but, writes the dean, the laymen refused to retreat from this position.

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[53] Johannes Bugenhagen (1485–1558) was the municipal preacher at Wittenberg as well as fellow reformer and friend of Martin Luther. Spangenberg cited this particular passage to argue that the Mansfelder position represented the Protestant view from the earliest stages, but I have been unable to locate its origin.

8) *That God forgives us our nature and essence*. The pastors claimed that this proposition had already been examined by the church and unconditionally condemned. The laymen answered that although it was new and foreign to the church it ought, nonetheless, to be accepted, for humankind owes the Lord God a pure nature. Neither side, concluded Autumnus, would acquiesce on this proposition.
9) *That Christ took on the flesh and blood of some other type, an essence not our own*. The pastors explained that Jesus' own flesh was exactly the same as humankind's, but the human being is conceived from a sinful seed. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost, without the semen of a man, and born from the pure and chaste Virgin. Autumnus reports that the laity accepted this position and condemned the proposition.
10) *That Christ redeemed the original sin*. The pastors explained that Jesus had redeemed his creatures from sin, but had not redeemed the sin itself. Therefore they could not support this article. The laymen readily admitted that this way of speaking was novel in the church, but because it was a product of the proposition regarding the essence of original sin, they did not want to condemn it. However, rather than defending it themselves, they passed this responsibility off on those who had raised it, writes Autumnus.
11) *That since the fall into sin, the formation of a human being in its mother's womb is not an act of creation*. The dean reports regarding this proposition that there was an especially extensive discussion. The pastors explained that they did not believe themselves to have been created thousands of years ago in the loins of Adam, but at the time of their conception in their mother's womb. Furthermore, the almighty hand of God had formed them in the womb, an act that was indeed true creation. In support of their position, they cited Luther's *Small Catechism* and treatise *The Bondage of the Will*. Furthermore, they argued that the new glosses suggesting that creation occurs in Adam's loins were merely a loophole. If original sin is actually humankind's corrupted nature and essence itself, either God was the author of sin, or proposition 12) *the devil was the creator of human nature*. The laity responded that all of humankind was indeed created in Adam's loins, but that was not a bodily creation. In this sense, creation means to count or to know. The pastors refuted this definition, demonstrating that to count and to create have two decidedly differ-

> ent meanings. In response, the laity attempted to make a distinction between creation and propagation (*creationem et propagationem*). They argued that if humankind was not created in the loins of Adam, then it would not be able to die his death. The pastors responded that this was an awful suggestion, leading necessarily to one of two results: some would say that the corrupted human being, now even after the fall, was still righteous; others that his creation was the work of the devil. But, writes Autumnus, the laymen continued to defend this proposition.

Autumnus's report of the proceedings allows for some concrete conclusions regarding the laity involved in this debate and their comprehension of the doctrinal aspects of the controversy over original sin. At times they are clearly out of their depth, forced to insist upon their positions without any argument to support them. At times they condone what they themselves admit are novelties. But although these individuals are no theologians, they do engage the pastors on a wide range of doctrinal issues and in doing so, demonstrate an impressive knowledge of a variety of theological concepts. The debate takes the laymen far beyond the central point of the controversy, the nature of original sin, into issues such as the nature of baptism, the workings of grace, the forgiveness of sins, the humanity of Christ, and the means by which sin is inherited. Moreover the laymen refer to a variety of authorities in support of their views: the Bible, Luther's writings, Augustine, and the letters of Bugenhagen, at times even attempting to use the writings of the Eislebeners against them. Although they did not "win" the debate, they did clearly demonstrate a deep engagement with the issues and it is not difficult to imagine that the Mansfelder clergy would have been pleased with their performance, not only for the courage of their convictions, but also for the content of their answers.

Although the debate takes the laity into a range of tangentially related doctrinal issues, taken as a whole, the lay confessions remain focused on original sin and its immediate impact on Lutheran theology. They fall along a spectrum from rather simple to fairly sophisticated. But it is just their variety in approach and complexity that makes them so interesting, for it suggests a certain amount of understanding, an ingestion of some of the main concepts and proofs of the clergy, and the ability to then articulate them under an array of circumstances. But it also raises the question of just why they were writing, who their

audience might have been, and to what degree the clergy themselves were involved in their production—questions that need to be answered before analyzing the content of the confessions themselves.

External Factors Influencing the Authors

Why the laymen wrote is not nearly so obvious as it might seem. Because the Mansfelder clergy continued to print and distribute their explanations of original sin even after the events of New Year's Eve 1574, it seems unlikely that the simple preservation and transfer of knowledge compelled the laymen to create their own statements of belief. Rather in most cases they wrote in response to a solicitation from the clergy. However, as is apparent from the circumstances noted above under which they produced their works, this request took two radically different forms. The first came from the hierarchy of the "official" church, Eislebeners, winners in the controversy. In their efforts to weed out opinions they considered heretical, the superintendent and consistory commanded those suspected of heterodoxy to set their beliefs to paper. From the perspective of the laity, some of these clerical orders were made in a threatening manner (*auf bedrawliche erforderung*),[54] others in a friendlier, pastoral style. In either case, the consistory carefully analyzed the statements for heterodox content, a fact not lost on the laity. Five of the nine confessions, as well as the debate, clearly occurred under direct orders from the superintendent and consistory; and in one more case this seems the likely genesis of the confession as well. The second request that parishioners compose their own statements of belief came from the Mansfelders, whose appeal was based on very different motivations, namely the insistence that the "common man" take an interest in the doctrinal debates of the period. Their request had the effect of empowering the laity by allowing them to judge doctrine.

Because the parishioners themselves would have known the use to which the clergy put their confessions, these laymen may well have crafted them to meet certain criteria. As to Mencel's use of their statements there can be no doubt. Because the superintendent was working to reintegrate the "heretical" laity into the official church, the confes-

[54] Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, 79r.

sions he commissioned became tools by which to determine whether and where the authors crossed the line between orthodoxy and heterodoxy.[55]

The lay authors who had been commanded by the consistory to write confessions responded to the knowledge that their words might be used against them in two ways. Some attempted to dissemble, refusing to articulate overtly their predisposition toward the Mansfelder view. This approach drew angry responses from the consistory, as in the case of Christoff Stöckel. The shoemaker clearly avoided using words and phrases common in the wider debate that would have indisputably exposed his loyalties in one direction or the other. The church court concluded that "Christoff Stöckel's confession is a tacked-together beggar's mantel that supports neither us nor Spangenberg."[56] Writing his confession two decades later in 1593, the lawyer Hans Drachstedt took a different approach, merely listing verses from various authorities that the Mansfelder clergy had employed to argue their position. Because he included no commentary, the consistory had a hard time condemning these statements.

The second approach taken by laymen ordered to compose confessions by the consistory was to overtly side with the Mansfelder clerics, borrow liberally from their language, and demonstrate full allegiance to their position. Although this tactic brought them into great difficulties, four of the laymen openly defied the authorities by clearly siding with the Mansfelder clergy in their confessions.

For the remaining four statements of belief, no evidence exists to indicate that they were produced under orders from the superintendent, nor do the authors state their motivations for writing. But as demonstrated in chapter six,[57] those of "a layman,"[58] "a Christian miner,"[59] and a "baker,"[60] were likely a part of the Mansfelder clergy's efforts to demonstrate the ability of the laity to judge in matters of

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[55] The consistory did, in fact, use their confessions against the laity. In four cases the consistory members' written evaluations appear alongside the lay confessions in the folios. In one case, a member of the consistory has underlined the offending portions of the layman's confession in red ink.

[56] "Christoff Stockels bekentnus ist ein zusamen gefluchter bettleins mantel, der Wieder uns, noch den Spangenbergischen Theil in Grunde genug thut." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 44r.

[57] See esp. [245–247].

[58] Anonymous, *Einfaltige Bekenntnis.*

[59] Anonymous, *Eines Christlichen Bergmans Kurtze Bekentnis.*

[60] Anonymous, *Böse Newe Zeittung.*

doctrine. For this reason, it is not surprising that the authors reiterated the arguments of their pastors quite faithfully.

This observation raises a final "external" issue, the question of the extent to which the Mansfelder clerics were involved in the production of the lay confessions. In cases where the statements suddenly materialized as a published pamphlets, it is difficult to imagine that there was not some rather direct clerical involvement. In others, such as the confessions of the imprisoned city council and burghers, and the debate between members of the laity and the Tal Mansfeld clergy, the laymen would have had access neither to the Mansfelder clergy nor to their writings. For the remaining confessions, the laymen would undoubtedly have had at least some access to the flurry of pamphlets that blanketed the territory. But even so, incorporating these clerical works into their own writings required a significant degree of understanding of the debate.

Lay Comprehension of Doctrine in the Confessions

Although a brief overview of the content of the confessions is recounted above, the question remains, to what degree did these laity, clearly committed to the Mansfelder cause, actually understand the controversy? In Mansfeld, the doctrinal debate focused on two closely related questions: first, whether original sin could be defined as a substance (in this case, corrupted human nature); and second, whether a distinction could be made between human nature and original sin.[61] For our purposes, the benchmark by which to measure the laity's comprehension of the doctrine will consist of two tests: did they attempt to answer these two questions (indicating that they understood them to be central) and if so, to what extent; and did they demonstrate an

[61] Even twenty years after Spangenberg and his colleagues were ejected from the territory, when the entire composition of the consistory had changed, these two questions formed the core of the controversy. In the consistory's proceedings against Hans Drachstedt in 1595, the churchmen became angry with him because in his written confession he had not addressed these questions. "Was aber nu sey er Special Bekentnuß belegentheit, somit Ja oder Nein von ihme gefordert werden ist, es uf diese zwene Punckten. Erstlich was die Erbsunde eigentlich sey, ob sie nemlich eine grundloße verderbung Menschliche Natur, oder daß menschen verterbte natur leib und seele selbst sey. Und ob ein unterschied sey zwischen daß Menschen verderbten Natur an sich selbst und denn der Erbsunde, damit sie verterbt und verunreinget ist." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 155r.

opinion as to how their views on original sin might impact broader Lutheran doctrine or daily life, thereby indicating that they understood the larger context of the debate. Furthermore, close attention will be paid to the type of arguments formulated or adopted by the laity to see what about the Mansfelder position resonated with them, and the degree to which they relied on clerical pamphlets and sermons.

Although theirs was not the complex understanding of Flacius, at some point in their confessions each of the lay authors addressed the central issue of the debate, arguing that postlapsarian human nature, prior to salvation, is substantially sin. The "Christian layman," wrote "We are nothing other than complete sin and unrighteousness itself and may not come into [God's] holy presence according to the accusation of the Holy Law and commandments, for they accuse us continually and justly, as is their function."[62] The shoemaker made the same general point: "Original sin is Adam and Eve's sin and disobedience, along with the innate sinful character and nature of our corrupted flesh, which we have received from them with the result that the entire nature and substance of humankind is corrupted to its foundations."[63] The weaver, Hans Dennert, insisted that he must pray "that [God] not impute to me my corrupted, evil nature and essence, which I am responsible to give over to Him completely holy and pure,"[64] while the simple layman, having described the impact of sin, concluded "So it follows that our entire nature and essence, in and of itself (with the exception of Christ and grace) is unrighteousness and also sin."[65] The imprisoned city council and burghers demonstrate the ability to think more abstractly when they suggest that as a result of Adam's fall, man "lost the righteousness and blessedness in which he was created, and

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[62] "sindt wir nichts den eytel sunde oder die ungerechtigkeit selbs und durffen also alle vor deinn heilige angesichte nicht kommen nach anklagung deines heiligen gesetzes und gebotten den das verklagett uns von rechts und seines ampts wegen alle augenblick…" Ötzen, *Ein schon christliches.* Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 35r.

[63] "Dii Erbsund ist Adams und Eva Sunde und ungehorsams sambtt der bessen von Ihnen uns angeporn sundtliche ardt, und Naturs unsers verderbetten Fleisches das dii gantze Natur und wesen des Menschen Im grunde verderbtt ist." Stöckel, *Einfaltige Bekendtnis*, Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 93v.

[64] "daß er mir auch gleichergestalt nicht meine verderbte böse Natur und Wesen zurechnen wollte, welche ich ihme gantz heilig und reine zu überantworten schuldig." Dennert, "Supplicatio," 401.

[65] "Und demnach folget, das unser gantze Natur und Wesen, an im selbst, Ausser Christo und der Gnade, Unrecht und demnach auch Sünde sey." Anonymous, *Einfaltige Bekenntnis von der Erbsünde eines Leyen*, 1.

before the holy countenance of God and according to his righteous law, became sin in a spiritual sense."[66] With the exception of these prisoners, the authors argued with concrete ontological language: the human being is sin; original sin is the nature of the flesh.

Other authors of the confessions also demonstrate a realization of the potential problems in characterizing a substance as evil. When asked to respond point blank to the statement "that original sin was actually a substance" (*Das die Erbsünde eigendtlich sey ein Wesenn*) the laymen who debated their clerics replied with a surprising degree of sophistication:

> If the declaration that original sin is its own distinct essence in and of itself is stated and proposed so bluntly, it would be false and Manichaean. But if it was used to describe people's corrupted nature and essence, that would be proper and truly Lutheran.[67]

Clearly the debaters understood the pitfalls of arguing for sin, in general, as a substance in and of itself. Such a proposition, as they pointed out, would be a dualist, Manichaean view. However, in the specific case of human nature, they were willing to argue that the corruption that took place with the Fall into sin was so extreme as to have altered the substance of human nature. Although the Mansfelder clerics had made this point, the response of the lay debaters nonetheless demonstrates a significant understanding of the wider implications of their view, as well as the ability to articulate it under the stressful conditions, in the presence of hostile individuals of superior education and authority. Clearly the laymen had grasped the central issue of the debate.

Even more important for assessing the laity's understanding of Reformation doctrine are references to the impact of their views on wider Lutheran theology, an issue addressed by all but one author.[68] For the Mansfelder clergy, arguing that original sin substantially altered human nature was necessary to preserve the fundamental Reformation doctrine of salvation by grace alone. To insist that human nature was

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[66] "…die angeschaffenen gerechtigkeit und seeligkeit verloren, und vor Gottes heiligen angesichte nach seinem gerechtenn gesetze, geistlicher weise zur suenden worden." *Bekenntnus der gefangenenn Rath*, Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 79r–79v.

[67] "wan sie so bloß gesetztt unndt gefürett würde alß were die Erbsünde ein eigenn besonders wesenn fur sichs selbst, so were sie falsch und Manicheisch.…wen sie aber gebrauchtt und gefurtt würde, vonn deß Menschen verderbten Natur unndt wesen, daß wehre sie rechtt und gutt Lutherisch." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 834, fol. 11v–12r.

[68] Hans Drachstedt does not comment on this issue.

substantially evil prior to God's grace eliminated any possibility that the human being might take part in achieving salvation, thereby forcing sole reliance upon the divine. The laity who wrote and debated clearly understood that their position on original sin helped emphasize and safeguard the Lutheran view of grace against any slide in the direction of Pelagianism. The "Christian layman" argued that because he was completely evil, his entire hope was now that "out of unrighteousness, [Christ] will make righteousness; out of death, life; out of darkness, light; out of the devil's children, children of God."[69] For him, God's grace, through the redeeming work of Christ, remained his only means of salvation. The linen weaver argued that if original sin was understood as something other than the substance of human nature, Christ and his work of salvation became superfluous: "…. If [human nature] were still good, we would not need Christ, who never sinned, no righteous for the unrighteous, no innocence for the guilty."[70]

The city council and burghers incarcerated after the occupation of Tal Mansfeld made a similar point in their confession. After insisting that in the fall into sin man lost the righteousness with which he was created and became sin in a spiritual sense, the laymen described the impact of this predicament for the human being: "From there, when we come before the holy countenance of God and wish to justify ourselves, we must say that with the exception of His grace and the redemption of our Lord, there is absolutely nothing in or on us that is good."[71] Without the aid of pastors or books, in the face of a deeply uncertain future (the captain of the guard had threatened to behead them all), these men were able to hone in on the central issue of the debate and demonstrate a clear understanding of their position's wider impact on Lutheran theology. They clearly comprehended that the Mansfelder view of original sin slammed the door shut on any possibility of individual righteousness, making the human being reliant

[69] "…das aus ungerechtigkeit, gerechtigkeit; aus dott, lewenn; aus finsternis, licht; aus deufels kinder, gottes kinder werden sollen." Ötzen, *Ein schon christliches*, Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 833, fol. 35r.

[70] "…und wenn sie [menschliche Natur] auch noch gut were, so bedürften wir keines CHRISTI, der nie keine Sünde gethan, keines Gerechten für die Ungerechten, keines Unschuldigen für die Selbschuldigen." Dennert, "Supplicatio," 401.

[71] "…so wir vor gottes heilges angesichte tretten, und uns rechtfertigen wollen, sagen muessen, das ausser seiner gnade, und Christi unsers Hernn Erlosung, lauter nichts guts In und an uns ist." *Bekenntnus der gefangenenn Rath*, Erfurt/Gotha MS Chart. A 201, fol. 79v.

solely upon the grace of God. And they demonstrated a willingness to fight for their views.

One argument in particular seems to have convinced the laity of the Mansfelder position. Although the Mansfelders used a variety of authorities to promote their understanding of original sin, appealing to the Scriptures, church fathers, and Luther, it seems that the logic, simplicity, emphasis on clear dichotomies, and the concrete nature of original sin's impact resonated most deeply with the laity. The brief confession of an anonymous miner recounted in its entirety demonstrates this point most clearly.

> I believe that God created me and all human beings in Adam originally completely pure, good, holy, thoroughly righteous, and according to his image. But through Adam's transgression and fall, we have all become evil, unholy, sin, and the devil's mask. Nonetheless, in Christ we are become once again good, pious, righteous, the image of God, indeed, righteousness that satisfies God, here in faith, and thereafter in eternity in essence.[72]

The symmetry in these three sentences is found in many of the confessions: good/evil, holy/unholy, righteous/sin, image of God/the devil's mask. Moreover, the miner's simple narrative is embraced by many of the lay authors: humankind was created completely good; the fall into sin made it completely evil; now Christ is the only means by which to recapture original righteousness. Moreover, there is a certain concreteness to the miner's argument: physical objects must be in and of themselves either good or evil. Finally, it is a very Christocentric position: salvation revolves entirely and indisputably around Christ, upon whom the human being, evil to its core, must rely.

In the debate with their pastors, the laymen also embrace the symmetry and simplicity of direct dichotomies, as well as the concrete nature of the Mansfelder argument, but in a more sophisticated way than the miner. Referencing Galatians 5 in which St. Paul sets up an opposition between life according to the spirit and life according to sinful human nature, two entities he suggests that are at constant war with one another, the laymen argued,

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[72] "Ich gleube das Gott Mich und alle Mensch/ in Adam anfenglich gar Reine/ Gut und Heilig/ Durchaus Gerecht/ und zu seinem Bilde geschaffen hat. Aber durch Adams ubertrettung und Fall/ sind wir Alle/ Böse/ Unheilig/ Sünde/ und Teuffelslarven geworden. Doch werden wir in Christo widerum Gut/ Frome/ Gerecht und Gottes Bilde/ Ja die Gerechtigkeit die für Gott gilt/ hie im Glauben/ und dort im Wesen." Anonymous. *Eines Christlichen Bergmans Kurtze Bekentinis*, 1.

> From this description it is clear that sin is not some evil character embedded in human nature, fighting against the spirit. For if that were the case, the holy apostle would have to have described three things: two that battle against one another, and one in which the fight takes place; or that the flesh, as a creation of God is in and of itself still good, but is controlled by another evil character living inside it, so that now with us, along with the evil character, they fight against the spirit—namely two against one.[73]

For these men, the world is black and white, good and evil, spirit and flesh. There is no neutral or middle ground. They also rely on their own sense and observations, noting the many contemporary reports indicate that the devil possesses only one part of a person, but leads him off to hell in his entirety, concluding: "If the nature was still good in and of itself, as a creation and creature of God, it would properly be spared, and only the distinct evil thing within the nature would be weeded out of the wheat and burned as tares in hellfire."[74] Again, the lay disputants demonstrate the importance of dichotomies as well as a physicality in their thought: objects are themselves good or evil. Evil body parts merely represent the essential status of the individual as a whole. It is all or nothing.

Like their clerical exemplars, the authors and those involved in the debate make many references to the Bible, Luther's works, and Augustine, citations that the Mansfelder clergy had used to establish their views on original sin. But the laity also seem to appreciate the clear, simple opposites they see in their clergy's viewpoint, a viewpoint they understand as essential for protecting the central doctrine of the Reformation, and a viewpoint confirmed by their own experience or the collective wisdom of the community as captured in the folktales of the period.

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[73] "In welcher beschreibung nicht gefunden wirdt das die Sünde alß eine böße arth In der Menschlichen Natur wonhafftigk, wieder den Geist streittet, denn uf den fall, müste der H. Apostell dreyerley beschreibenn haben—zwey, die da wieder einander streittenn, und eins darinnen gestritten wirdt, oder das das fleisch, so alß Gottes geschopff an Ihm selbst noch gutt, doch von der bösenn arth In dem Fleisch wonendt, uberweldiget, mitt uns neben der bösen arth, wieder den Geist, undt also zwey wieder eins streitte." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 834, fol. 6r.

[74] "Solte nu die Natur an Ihr selbst, alß Gottes geschöpff unndt Creatur noch gutt sein, wurde der Natur billich verschonnet, und allein das unterschiedene böse ding auß der Natur zum hellischenn feuer als das unkrautt auß dem Weitzenn gesamlet." Wernigerode MS Rep. A 12a III, No. 834, fol. 7v.

Conclusion

The existence of lay confessions of belief, the circumstances under which these individuals and groups wrote, their own testimony, and their use by the clergy offer insight into the laity's motivations for writing. During the controversy over original sin in the territory of Mansfeld, three options lay open to the laity: not to become involved at all, to side with the faction officially deemed orthodox (the Eislebeners), or to support the clerics officially condemned as heterodox (the Mansfelders), but who offered a greater degree of involvement in the church and even the possibility of some self-determination in questions of doctrine. Most of the laity in the territory took option one or two. But a fair number also took the third, even though it meant considerable personal hardship. Although it is clear that other factors also influenced their writing, these authors demonstrate an unambiguous comprehension of the central issue of the debate and some notion of its wider impact on Lutheran theology, proof of which they find in the clear dichotomies of the Mansfelder viewpoint and which they root in their own experiences. To an amazing degree, the core of Flacius' original argument, along with those ancillary issues attached to it by the famous Gnesio-Lutheran professor already in 1560 at the Weimar debate with Viktorin Strigel, is reflected in the writings of the Mansfelder laity. Moreover through their expressions and actions, they exhibit a sincere commitment to the content of their confessions. Finally, the mere act of producing a confession was for them both an exercise in and a confirmation of the view that the laity had the ability and the right to play an active role in the church, a position that included the comprehension and profession of theological concepts. All of this demands the conclusion that doctrine, while one of many factors, played a significant role in the laity's decision to become involved in the debate.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

The controversy over original sin as it played out in the territory of Mansfeld sheds new light on lay religiosity in the heart of Reformation Germany a half century after Luther's teachings first arrived there. The extraordinary evidence generated by the conflict allows for four conclusions.

First, for both clergy and lay folk, religiosity was informed by a variety of what might loosely be called "religious factors" that included, but went beyond, narrow doctrinal definitions. Put another way, specific dogmas were not considered in isolation, but quickly intermingled with a web of other contemporary and relevant religious ideas. Already among the clergy it is clear that a variety of issues, not all of them of an intellectual nature, became interwoven with the core question of the nature of original sin. For the Mansfelders, defining original sin as the substance of humankind meant that the human being had absolutely no possibility of affecting his own salvation, but was forced to rely solely upon God's grace. In this way they defended the central discovery of Luther's Reformation. Moreover, their definition of original sin was closely attached to the notion that the Scriptures were clear and uncomplicated so that the heart enlivened by faith, not the workings of the intellect, was all that was necessary to grasp their content. Such a perspective brought with it a corollary that had been a key aspect of the early Reformation but had lost ground in the intervening decades, namely that the laity had an active role to play in the church.

For the Eislebeners too the debate was about more than just the definition of original sin. They were interested in defending key doctrines of broader Christianity, such as the nature of Christ's humanity and the notion that only God, and not the devil, is capable of creation. In other words, they focused on the larger implications of the Mansfelder definition of original sin which, when pushed to its logical conclusions, led to postulations untenable in Christianity. Thus the Mansfelder's definition had to be wrong. The problem was that a simple reading of both the Bible and Luther's writings seemed at odds with their definition and corroborating of their opponents' position. As a result they were forced to admit that the Bible and Luther could

be tricky, their meanings not always readily available to the common man. This led to the abandonment of one of the key arguments of the early Reformation—that the Bible and its meaning were open directly to anyone, regardless of education. So although the controversy was, technically speaking, about the nature of original sin, it was also about the doctrine of justification by grace alone, the lucidity of Scripture and the writings of Luther, and the role of the laity in the life of the church. None of these factors were lost on the laity, so that for both them and the clergy, the debate was about a bundle of religious issues, each raised by the efforts to define original sin.

The counts too were influenced by of these factors, but in their singular role as rulers of the territory were also subject to other "religious" stimuli. Disparate family histories with respect to the early Reformation proved a wedge between the Vorderort line and their Hinterort and Mittelort cousins. For those counts who espoused the Mansfelder side, a long history of support for the Lutheran cause was undergirded by convictions about the proper role of a Christian prince, namely that he held ultimate responsibility for the purity of doctrine in his territory. But they also saw themselves as simple Christians, and therefore responsible before God for their beliefs, a notion emphasized by the Mansfelder clergy. For the counts, the controversy over original sin came to embody a multiplicity of factors that might loosely be called "religious" in nature. Specific doctrines, it seems, were never considered in isolation from a variety of religious issues.

But a second conclusion that can be draw from the evidence in Mansfeld is that for the counts (and the laity in general), "religious" factors were only some of the pieces of the puzzle. An assortment of other non-religious influences also affected them during the controversy over original sin. For the counts, political considerations played a significant role in their participation in the controversy, which occurred precisely at the moment when their position in Mansfeld was in jeopardy. With the administrator of the archdiocese of Magdeburg and the elector of Saxony devouring the territory, it was necessary to assert their autonomy in every way possible. This meant emphasizing their role as imperial counts with jurisdiction over the temporal government, but also as the heads of the other regiment in Mansfeld, the territorial church. Aggressively asserting their views on doctrine over against the theologians of the encroaching powers helped to underscore their autonomy.

Among those counts who took the Eislebener side in the debate, the politics of the period clearly played a preponderant role. Forced into the *Sequestration*, they were at the mercy of the administrator and elector, reliant upon the goodwill of these princes for any hopes of reclaiming their previous positions in the territory. This fact, coupled with a family history of support for Albertine Saxony, little connection to the early Reformation, and a group of theologians insisting that they should not involve themselves in the intricacies of the debate, rendered the Vorderort counts willing to forgo any participation in the definition of doctrine. Their absence in this regard did not, however, keep them from using what political power they retained to attack the Mansfelders, either by employing their *ius patronatus* to eject all Mansfelder pastors, or via requests to the sequestering lords to root out the Mansfelder laity. For both groups of counts then, the debate was to a large extent an effort to preserve their identities and their political powers.

Nor were the Mansfelder laity immune to the non-religious forces that piled up as accretions in the controversy among the clergy and counts. Those with political connections or loyalties to the counts supporting the Mansfelder clergy displayed their support by throwing their weight behind these churchmen as well. Social networks also played a significant role among the laity, as groups of family and friends supported the Mansfelder clergy *en masse* or came to the aid of pastors with whom they had personal connections. And for some, an association with Luther and a desire to be proper Lutherans also acted as a motivating factor. Thus the issues impinging upon the Mansfelder laity included political and social considerations, as well as questions of identity and religious autonomy.

The point here is that questions of doctrine were embedded in a broad spectrum of factors, some religious but many not. If there is one thing that social historians of the last decades have taught us it is that the notion that the Reformation succeeded among the laity solely on the merits of a superior theology is a myth. The variety of issues revealed in the laboratory of late sixteenth-century Mansfeld alone is staggering, and undoubtedly there were other factors to which the historian can never have access. But does this mean that doctrine and theology failed to resonate, had little impact, played no role, found little fallow ground? The evidence from Mansfeld indicates, on the contrary, that belief in doctrine along with a broad understanding of the central

tenets of Lutheran theology were profoundly important issues on the wide spectrum of factors that deeply influenced the Mansfelder laity.

So a third conclusion to be drawn is that although we cannot discern the precise extent to which belief motivated various individuals to act, the evidence confirms that its role was central and powerful. Those laity who took the Mansfelder side in the debate and who wrote descriptions of their beliefs demonstrated a clear understanding of the central issue of the debate. For most, the simple dichotomies of the Mansfelder position seem to have been comprehensible and convincing. On the lower end of the social spectrum, the intricacies of the debate, along with the various sub-arguments, seem not to have resonated particularly well, but the more sophisticated members of society exhibit an impressive knowledge of the controversy's ancillary arguments. In particular, the Hinterort counts and the laymen who debated their pastors exhibit a broad comprehension of many of the consequences and implications that spun out from the competing definitions of original sin. But laity from across the socio-economic spectrum all show that they understood the argument in its core, a fact that diminishes the probability that they were using the controversy merely as a means to further political interests or for social gain. What is more, many remained faithful to their positions long after any social or political advantage might have been gleaned, and often in the face of considerable pressure to the contrary.

Perhaps more important for assessing the role of doctrine in the laity's actions and its place in the wider Reformation was the laity's ability to understand the implications of the Mansfelder definition of original sin for the broader Lutheran system of belief. If they had demonstrated no understanding of how this debate impacted other Protestant doctrines, it would be easier to put their actions in the controversy down to political partisanship or some other social factors. But again and again, from the rather unsophisticated to the fairly complex, they reveal a comprehensive understanding of the basics of Lutheran theology and could place the debate over original sin into this context. And it is clear that they certainly believed themselves to be acting out of religious conviction, a factor that needs to be taken seriously as some historians have recently argued.[1] For many of the laity of Mansfeld, doctrine and beliefs mattered deeply.

[1] See, for example, Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*.

A fourth and final conclusion we can make is that ideas formulated among elites could have significant attraction and impact across society. To a startling degree the central concept, along with the ancillary issues attached to it already by Flacius in Weimar in 1560, found an outlet in the confessions of the Mansfelder laity. Flacius' conviction that the essence of humankind is original sin was claimed again and again by the laity, both in writing and during consistorial examinations. His definition's function as a shield to the Lutheran doctrine of justification echoes through the articulations of the Mansfelder laity. His insistence on the clarity and simplicity of Scripture is repeated in the mouths of the commoners and displayed their actions. In other words, the Mansfelder clerics were highly successful in educating their parishioners about the various layers of meaning that their definition of original sin encompassed. But this fact also suggests considerable interest on the part of the laity. After his expulsion from Mansfeld, Spangenberg commented on the aptitude and commitment of his former congregation:

> Strangers who passed through praised our church orders and services calling them a little paradise of the Lord. The little boys and girls were so well instructed that they could discuss the articles of our teachings…better and more adroitly and convincingly than Mencel and his group and many highly educated doctors. Our churches were always full of parishioners, and I found a devotion and a desire among the folk to hear sermons, pray, learn the catechism, and attend the sacraments. Indeed, there was an excellent love and unity between pastors and parishioners.[2]

Although Spangenberg's description was meant for maximum propagandistic impact, much of what he says is borne out in the words and actions of the Mansfelder laity.

Where does this leave us with regard to our understanding of lay religiosity in the late sixteenth century? One of the lessons of this book

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[2] "Frembde Leute die da durchzogen/ und unser Kirchenordnunge und Gottesdienste sahen/ rhümeten solches an andern orten/ als einem kleinen Paradiß deß Herrn/ Es waren die kleinen Kinder/ Knaben und Mägdlein angerichtet und unterweiset/ das sie von allen artickeln der Lere…besser/ gründlicher/ artlicher und bescheidner reden kondten/ denn Mentzel mit alle seinem hauffen/ und vil grosser Hoch gelarter Doctores dazu/ Unsere Kirche war allezeit voller Zuhörer/ und funden ich die Leutlin mit lust unnd andacht zu Predigt/ zum Gebet/ zur ubung deß Catechischmi/ zu Sacramenten/ und sahe man feine liebe und eynigkeit zwischen Predigern und Zuhörern/ etc.," Spangenberg. *Caecitas Germaniae*, 292.

is that all lay religiosity is essentially local. Because it is influenced by a combination of extra doctrinal as well as religious factors, many specific to a particular location, the resultant religiosity will be different depending upon where one looks. Certainly Mansfeld exhibits some unique characteristics relative to other German Lutheran territories: the *Sequestration* was not a common experience throughout the German-speaking Lutheran lands; the Mansfelder clergy focused an inordinate amount of attention on the education and empowerment of the laity; and the personal ties to Luther were closer than in most other places.

But because the factors influencing lay religiosity are unique in one location does not necessarily mean that the results will be significantly different in another. A high degree of doctrinal understanding and theological conviction has been demonstrated among the laity in other territories with their own distinctive histories and circumstances. In Joachimsthal, for example, itself riven by religious controversy (in this case between Lutherans and Catholics), Lutheran hymns were the vehicle for doctrinal understanding and religious loyalty among the people.[3] Future studies will undoubtedly reveal that elsewhere different factors prevailed, but with similar results.

What is clear is that Mansfeld (as well as Joachimsthal) provides powerful evidence that challenges the notion that doctrine played little or no part in the actions of the laity during the Reformation, particularly in its later phases. At the very least, some of the common folk display a burning interest in questions of belief. Moreover, some localities and some individual pastors demonstrate a great degree of success teaching their parishioners the fundamentals of the Lutheran confession. Some lay folk imbibed them to the extent that they became motivating forces in their lives. Clearly many social, material, and political factors were woven together to cause the laity to become involved in the movement we call the Protestant Reformation. But Mansfeld and other territories, most notably those suffering from doctrinal conflict, attest that doctrine and belief deserve an important position on this list.

[3] See Brown, *Singing the Gospel*.

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